[illegible]

AND

INCENTI[illegible]

To the LOVE of

GO[illegible]

Pathetically Discours'd

[illegible]

[illegible]

By the Honourable

ROBERT BOYL[illegible]

The Sixth Edition much Co[illegible]

Let us consider one another, to provoke unto Love. Heb. 10. 24.

In the *SAVOY*.

[illegible]ted by *T. N.* for *Henry Herringman*, [illegible] be sold at his Shop at the *Anchor* in the [illegible] of the *New-Exchange*. MDCLXX[illegible]

07-119

TO
The COUNTESS
OF
WARWICK.

My Dear Sister,

I Expect you ſhould ſomewhat wonder, that after having for above Eleven years been careful to keep this following Letter from the publick view, and that too notwithſtanding the Sollicitation (not to ſay Importunity) of divers Illuſtrious Perſons, and even Your Commands to releaſe it from its Confinement; I ſhould now at length give way to its paſſing abroad into the

World, and its making you a publick and solemn address. Wherefore judging my self oblig'd to give you an account of a Paper, for which you have been long pleas'd so highly and so obligingly to concern your self, I must, to remove your wonder, inform you, That I am reduc'd to this Publication in my own defence. For, whilst I was far from dreaming of permitting this Epistle to pass out of my Closet, it happen'd, that a broken Copy of it did (by I know not what misfortune for me) fall into the hands of a necessitous person, who would needs perswade himself, that by printing it, he might relieve some of his present wants; and thereupon proffer'd to sell the Copy for a sum of Money. But, my good fortune leading him to a Stationer, to whom my name was not unknown, he very civilly sent me forthwith notice of the Proposition

poſition that was made him, and after came himſelf to acquaint me, that the Copy about which he had been treated with, being but One of Two or Three that were then abroad, ſome or other of them would, queſtionleſs, ſoon find the way to the Preſs. This unwelcome Accident did little leſs trouble than ſurprize me; for, beſides that it impos'd on me the Neceſſity of a Publication I had ſo long Declin'd; and beſides that I knew, that Compoſures of a very differing Nature being expected from me, the appearing of this, in ſtead of Them, would make this unwelcome to many, though it had fewer Imperfections than it has: Beſides theſe things, (I ſay) my Sight was then, and is ſtill, ſo impair'd by a diſtemper in my Eyes; and the hours I could diſpoſe of, were ſo præ-ingag'd to Philoſo-

Some Treatiſes relating to Experimental *Philoſophy.*

phical Themes, that I could not promiſe my ſelf ſo much as to read it over before its going to the Printer. But, conſidering after all this, that the Copy I had by me was like to prove more Full, and leſs Faulty, than any of thoſe that ſome endeavour'd to obtrude upon the World, I thought it leſs inconvenient to venture mine own abroad, than to run the hazard of a ſurreptitious Edition of a Diſcourſe, that could ſo ill bear the appearing with any other Blemiſhes than thoſe it brought with it into the World from my Pen. And therefore having put it into the hands of perſons, whoſe eminent abilities, the more knowing part of the Nation has long and juſtly admir'd, and begg'd their Impartial Opinion and Caſtigations of it, (giving them entire liberty to Alter or Expunge whatever they diſlik'd;) and finding

finding (by haſtily turning over the Leaves) that their Caſtigations were only enough to let me ſee, that they had heedfully read it over; and were accompanied with encouragements, which care was taken to keep me from looking upon as meer Complements: I let it go to the Preſs, without ſo much as having once Perus'd it, or heard it read over, ſince the Stationer firſt gave me the Advertiſement I told you of. Which I made the leſs ſcruple to do, becauſe a Critick, whoſe Judgement and Piety I much reverence, ſeriouſly endeavoured to perſwade me, that I ought not in Conſcience to decline publiſhing what he was pleaſed to think proper to Kindle or cheriſh the Flames of Divine Love in the Breaſts of the Readers. And my Haſte it ſelf did afterwards Promiſe me theſe Advantages, That notwithſtanding my

Books not coming forth ſooner, I ſhould not loſe the Excuſe of Youth *I had when it was Written: nay, and That the Faulty paſſages which may be met with in it, will perhaps be charged upon thoſe that ſuffer'd them to paſs Uncorrected, when they had ſo abſolute a Power to Expunge or Reform them. Theſe, and the like Motives, having induc'd me to conſent to the Publication of the following Letter, I needed not deliberate long, To whom I ſhould addreſs it. For, ſince that Accompliſh'd* Lindamor, *whom it ſo much concern'd, has left the World, there is no perſon in it to whom this Addreſs is any thing near ſo due, as unto You, dear Siſter. It was at that Delicious* Leeze, *where you are now the Miſtreſs, that this Letter was written; and it was of You that I borrow'd thoſe hours I ſpent in writing it.*

'Twas

'Twas to You that I shew'd it almost Sheet by Sheet, before I resolv'd to send it away. 'Tis You that can best Excuse the Imperfections of it, as knowing not only the more obvious, but the more Private Avocations and other Disadvantages, among which it was penn'd. 'Tis you that have ever since Sollicited me to divulge it, and have given me the greatest Encouragements to do so, not only by those Sollicitations which imply'd Your own favourable Opinion of it, but by procuring me (by concealing or disguising my name) the unsuspected Opinions of divers competent Judges: in a word, this Address belongs upon so many Scores to You, that I could not make it any where else, without manifestly Wronging You. I know, Dear Sister, that it is not usual to Dedicate Books to so near a Relation; and that it is usual in Dedicatory Epistles, both to Depreciate what one

one has Written, and to Extol the Person that one Writes to, especially if it be one of Your Sex and Quality. But, You know too, that I never swore Allegiance to Custom, and therefore will not, I suppose, wonder to see me as little Sollicitous to conform to it on This occasion as on Others. In an Age, when so few Persons have Merit enough, to keep that from being Flattery, which should be but Praise, I am not at all Ambitious of casting my self upon the unhappy Necessity, of either Flattering, or appearing Rude; when by better choosing the Objects of my Addresses, I can, as Occasion requires, give Praises, without Untruth, or forbear them without Incivility. Nor dare I presume, that a Lye ceases to be a Fault, by being put into a Dedicatory Epistle; as Antiently the Hurtful Beasts forgot their Pernicious Nature, when brought into

into the Ark. Not to mention that Books of Devotion have generally the ſtrange and unhappy Fate, of being Leſs Welcome to them that Moſt, than to them that Leſs, need them. As for the Diſcourſe I preſent You, though My opinion of it may be gueſs'd at, by the Privacy to which I have ſo long Confin'd it: Yet becauſe, as in Phyſick, to have a good opinion of the Medicine, and the Doctor; ſo in Books of Devotion, (which are a kind of Phyſick for the Mind) to have one of the Compoſure, or of the Writer, both inclines us to look after the Præſcriptions, and Advantages their Operations; For this reaſon I ſhall ſay nothing to diſparage a Diſcourſe, which is of a Nature to aim more at the being practiſed by the Readers, than the being pardon'd; and ſhall not at all repine to ſee it find from the Publick as Favourable

ble a Reception, as it has hitherto met with in Cloſets. And now, dear Siſter, though I know you will not; yet I doubt, my other Readers will expect, that this Letter ſhould, according to the Mode of Epiſtles Dedicatory, be concluded with Commendations of you, and Complements to you: It being almoſt as much out of faſhion in ſuch addreſſes to omit giving praiſes, as 'tis to believe the praiſes given on ſuch occaſion. But, though I can praiſe you without either disbelieving my ſelf, or fearing to be disbelieved by any that knows you; yet, beſides that our Relation, and our Friendſhip would make ſuch a way of writing misbecoming me on all occaſions; I know your Piety and your Modeſty, would peculiarly diſallow it upon this; where the ſubject I am to entertain you with, is of ſuch a Nature

ture, as would make a Flaunting Addreſs, but a very unſuitable Introduction to it. The Nature of my Theme, as well as the ſtrictneſs of your Virtue, and our Friendſhip, forbidding me here to celebrate you, otherwiſe than by letting the World ſee, that I dare, even in a Dedicatory addreſs, without fear of diſpleaſing you, forbear to celebrate you. And if it be demanded, why then I refrain not likewiſe from writing to you a Dedication? I ſhall anſwer, That I am unwilling to loſe this opportunity of making a publick acknowledgment, that as I have the Honour to be your Brother, and your Friend, ſo I have the Juſtice to think it very much my Happineſs to be ſo: Eſpecially, ſince you are pleaſed to aſſure me, That my Relation to you has rather been the occaſion than the ground of a Friend-

ſhip,

ship, that does, whilst it enjoyns me to profess my self without Complement, Oblige me to be, with all the Sincerity that's possible,

My Dear Sister,

Your most Affectionate Brother, and most Faithful Humble Servant,

ROBERT BOYLE.

Advertiſements to the Reader.

(As they were Written ſome Years ſince, when ſome Intelligent Perſons were to have a ſight of the following *Diſcourſe.*)

TO *prevent thoſe Scruples which elſe might ariſe in the peruſal of the enſuing Diſcourſe, the Reader of it is requeſted to take notice.*

I. *That though Ignorance hath been of late ſo much in faſhion with too many of our Young Nobility, that ſome paſſages of the enſuing Papers may ſeem unfit to have been written to a Young Gentleman, yet the Perſon they were addreſs'd to, being both a Traveller, a Linguiſt, and a Scholar, it was not improper to diſcourſe with him at the rate of ſuppoſing him ſo qualifi'd.*

II. *That the enſuing Letter was not written ſingle, being but the Laſt of Divers*; wherein *Love in general was Confeſſed, Juſtifi'd, and Celebrated*; wherein *the received way of Making Love was Explicated, Defended, and Oppoſed*; wherein *Conſtancy and Inconſtancy in Love were argued For and Againſt*; wherein *Platonick Love was Explicated, Celebrated, and* wherein *the Cure of Love was propoſed,*

and

and Prosecuted; wherein (*to dispatch*) *the Controverted Points concerning Love were discours'd of, in a way suited to the several Themes*; *and to the Humors and Principles of the supposed Writers. But all the former Papers, (written in Complement to a fair Lady) though very free from the Guilt of either Licentiousness, or Prophaneness, have been by the Author judged too little Serious, either to appear Alone, or to accompany the ensuing Discourse, wherein he has expressed his Own Opinions, as in the former he but deduced of those Imaginary Persons.*

III. *That the following Paper was to have been Attended by another, wherein the Properties and Duties of* Seraphick Love *were to have been Explicated and insisted on, but the* Author, *before he had Written that Other, accidentally meeting with a* French *Book, wherein, though what he had already Discourſed of were not handled, he found that much of what he had designed to set down was anticipated; and the most Pertinent Considerations his intended Themes suggested, were skilfully displayed already: he fear'd it might be injurious to his Reader, and himself, if he should either turn a transcriber of others Notions, or decline the best thoughts belonging to his* Theme, *that the Less Good ones might pass without suspicion for his Own.*

L' Ammon. Divin. de Mr. du Moulin.

IV. That

IV. *That the ensuing trifle having been written in haste, and by snatches, amongst distracting avocations, and far from Literary accommodations, is freely submitted to the censure of Learned and impartial perusers, especially Divines: who are by the Author requested to believe its mistaking passages, and unwary expressions, (if it contain any such) to have been altogether* Unintentional, *and such as they shall never find it to be more than one labour to make him discern and retract; he being resolved by Gods assistance, to continue still obsequious enough to all clearer discoveries of truth, to be able to say,* Errare possum, Hæreticus esse Nolo. *And, as he is on his part so resigned, and so willing to be rectify'd, so he expects this Equity from those, to whose judgments he submits, that, considering he intended not to write a solemn and regular Treatise, but a private and familiar Epistle, they will pass by such unaccurateneſses as are wont to be incident to composers of this later Nature. He presum'd he might sometimes make bold with the vulgar Laws of Tenses, treating of an Eternity that admits them not. He hop'd, that the freedom taken in some of his expressions concerning Love, and the wonted objects of it, would be excus'd, by its being exacted by the Design he had upon* Lindamor, *though he had not (which yet he has) otherwise accounted for it. He intends not to adopt those (too*

In a Dedication of all the fore-mention'd Letters to my Lady T. F.

often

often erroneous) Traditions of the Vulgar, whence he ſometimes draws Compariſons, that he may not deny himſelf the Liberty taken by the Generality of Writers, (without excepting the Learneder ſort of them) who ſcruple not in Popular Compoſures, to make Similies and Alluſions grounded on Popular Traditions and Perſwaſions. As for thoſe common Places, which the Method of our Author's Diſcourſe allow'd him not to decline, he hopes the Reader will diſcern by his way of Writing, that he loves to uſe them, not as Travellers, but as Hunters uſe the High-wayes: for the Traveller, when he once gets into the Road, makes it his buſineſs to Keep in it; whereas the Hunter, if he meets one lying in his way, is not fond of Staying in it, but nimbly Croſſes it, or Traverſes ſo much of it, as is requiſite to be paſt through in the purſuite of his Game. And laſtly, if in ſome few Paſſages of the following Letter (eſpecially about the beginning of it) the Expreſſions are leſs Grave and Solemn than the Deſign; the Author hopes, that even They will yet appear tolerably Serious, for the Airieſt parts of a Letter, written by one Young Gentleman to another.

SOME

SOME MOTIVES To the Love of GOD.

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My Deareſt Lindamor.

I Am very much delighted to learn both by the voice of Fame, and the Information of much more credible Relators, that *Hormione*'s cold uſage has cur'd you of the Fever her ſcorching eyes had given you: and that when once you found your ſelf reſerved, to ſhew, what wonders her Eyes were able to perform, you ſeaſonably reſolv'd to become an Inſtance of the power, rather of Reaſon, than of Love; and accordingly, did your ſelf the right to fruſtrate the vain hopes, your inſulting Miſtriſs cheriſh'd, to ma-

nifeſt in you, that her Charmes were capable to make your Flame perſevere, when her change had made it as well cauſeleſs as hopeleſs. I could wiſh indeed for your ſake, that you owed your Cure more entirely to your Reaſon, and leſs to your reſentment; That the Extraction of your freedom may no ways blemiſh it. But, ſince unallay'd ſatisfactions are joys too Heavenly, to fall to many Mens ſhares on Earth, I cannot but conclude, that your recovery, even on theſe tearms, deſerves I ſhould congratulate it. For, the *French* ſay truly, that *Les plus courtes Folies ſont les meilleures.* And Liberty being too high a Bleſſing to be diveſtible of that nature by circumſtances; I (that ſeldom deplore him, who, by loſing his Miſtriſs, recovers himſelf) think that *Hermione* has but intentionally, not eventually diſoblig'd you; and hath made your flames a better return, by reſtoring you your own heart, than ſhe could have done by exchanging hers for it. But that which not leaſt endears to me your Recovery, is, that I am aſſur'd by Perſons, from whom I dare credit even ſo welcome News, that my endeavors prov'd ſo happy, as to be conducive to it, and that

the

the conſiderations I ventur'd to preſent you, did at leaſt ſo far contribute to your freedom, as to give you the deſire and the deſign of regaining it. For, I hope, I need not tell you, that I ſeldom uſe endeavors, whoſe proſperouſneſs is more welcome to me, than thoſe that aſpire to ſerve *Lindamor*. And though I cannot ever pay you any great Services in relation to my vaſtly greater deſires, yet I can ſcarce do you little ones in relation to the delight reſulting from the having done you any. Nor has the joy which this ſucceſs of my diſcourſes brings me, being ſparingly encreas'd by my having ventur'd them with much more deſire, than expectation, of their proſpering; and leſs out of any ſtrong hope they would ſucceed, than out of an unwillingneſs to leave the means, I thought leaſt improbable, unaſſay'd: being invited to excite you to greater hopes, than I durſt allow my ſelf for you; by the example of Generals, who, whatſoever diſtruſtful thoughts they harbor in their breaſts, ſuppoſe, that (before the battel) to make their ſoldiers fight ſucceſsfully, 'tis as well conducive as requiſite, by encouraging Orations, to make them think they

ſhall do ſo. For, although I endeavour'd indeed to perſuade you, that Reaſon being born Sovereign of the Paſſions, though her Lenity or Supineneſs do ſometimes both occaſion and permit their Uſurpations; ſhe is ſeldome ſo diveſted of her Native Power, but that whenſoever ſhe pleaſeth to imploy what ſhe hath left, ſhe is able to reſume what ſhe hath loſt: And though I was willing you ſhould believe, that to perfect what your Reſentment had begun, was a Task ſo eaſie, that the Victory was as much in your power, as the Reſolution of attempting it; yet, notwithſtanding all this, I ſay, I was once half perſwaded, that to undertake the Curing of a Lover, was the next Weakneſs to the being one. And, *Lindamor*, to deal ingeniouſly with you, your Recovery hath circumſtances in it, that make me very apprehenſive, that you are not yet out of the danger of a Relapſe, and that you have not half ſo abſolutely abandon'd your former Amorous Conſtitution of Mind, as the former Idol of it. I know that from a perſon, who, for one that hath never yet been hurt by *Cupid*, is accuſed of uſing him ſlightingly, and ſeverely enough, you will expect Endeavours

deavours to preſerve you from Relapſes, by ſuch diſſuaſions from Love, as its Votaries will ſcarce vouchſafe ſo mild a Title to, as that of Invectives againſt it. And I ſhall Ingeniouſly acknowledge, *Lindamor*, that I have been ſometimes no very unready Satyriſt on that Theme; and with a Pen, reliſhing of the Liberty I cheriſh'd in my heart, endeavour'd to diſabuſe thoſe ſervile Souls, that being born to Reaſon, ſo far degraded themſelves, as to boaſt ſolely an exceſs of Paſſion; and had ſuch low and narrow Thoughts of Felicity and Miſery, as to expect either from a Womans uſage. All which I thought I might the freelier do, becauſe having never known the infelicities of Love, but in the ſufferings of others, I might probably ſuppoſe, that my Declamations againſt it would paſs for the productions of my Reaſon, not my Revenge. But, *Lindamor*, though the extravagancies of ſome Mens folly, have been ſometimes too great, to let me avoid laughing ſomewhat Satyrically at it; yet I am really too little an Enemy to Love, unleſs exceſſive or miſ-placed, by indiſtinct and diſfiguring Conſiderations, to repreſent to you the Nobleſt Paſſion of the Mind, as its moſt hide-

ous and formidable Diſeaſe.

Sect. 1. To love even with ſome paſſionateneſs, the perſon you would Marry, is not only allowable, but expedient, being almoſt neceſſary to the Duty of fixing your affection, where you have once engaged your faith; for, it hath been obſerv'd, that Love doth ſeldom ſuffer it ſelf to be confin'd by other Matches, than thoſe of its own making. And few, but they, that are ſo wiſe as they ſee cauſe to be almoſt in Love before-hand with thoſe they Marry, prove ſo honeſt, as afterwards to be in Love with none elſe. Since therefore, the Marriage of a wiſe Man ſuppoſes at leaſt as high a degree of Love, as he is capable to cheriſh, without forfeiting that Title; I can ſcarce diſallow the being moderately in Love without being injurious to Marriage, which is a Relation, that though I can with much leſs reluctancy permit others, than contract my ſelf; yet dare I not abſolutely condemn a condition of Life as expedient to no man, without which, even Paradice and Innocence were not ſufficient to compleat the happineſs of the firſt Man. Thus you ſee *Lindamor*, that I do not promiſcuouſly Quarrel with all ſorts of Love, but endeavour

deavour onely to poſſeſs you with this Truth, that as anciently among the *Jews*, there were odoriferous unguents, which it was neither unuſual nor unlawful to anoint themſelves with, or beſtow upon their friends; but there was a certain peculiar compoſition too, of a precious Ointment, which God having reſerv'd to be employ'd in his own ſervice; with that, the perfuming of their friends was Criminal and Sacrilegious: ſo there are regulated degrees of Love, which 'tis not forbidden to harbor for a friend, a Miſtriſs, or a Wife; but there is too a certain peculiar ſtrain, or (if I may ſo call it) heroick Temperament of Love, which, where ever it is found, makes it belong, as unalienable, as juſtly unto God. A virtuous Wife may love both her Husbands Relations and her own, and yet be truly ſaid to love him with her whole Heart; becauſe there is a certain unrivall'd degree of kindneſs; and a peculiar ſort of Love, which conſtitutes true conjugal affection, that ſhe confines to him, and reſerves intirely for him, and would think it criminal to harbor for any other perſon: ſo a Religious ſoul may obey the Command,

of

of Loving God entirely, though she allow her Affections other Objects; provided they be kept in due Subordination to, and kept from entring into Competition with, that Love, which ought to be appropriated to Him; and which results chiefly from, an either altogether or almost, unincreasable Elevation, and Vastness of Affection; from an entire Resignment to, and an absolute Dependence on, the Lov'd Party; from a restless Disquiet upon the least sense or doubt of her Displeasure; from a greater Concern in her Interests, than ones own; from an Expectation no less than Felicity or Wretchedness from her Friendship or Indignation; or at least a Persuadedness that nothing can be a greater Happiness than her Favour, or deserve the name of Happiness without it. For, where ever a Passion has these properties, or any of them, conspicuous in it; it cannot, but by being consecrated to God, avoid becoming injurious both to Him and to it self. The very Nobleness of it entitles Him to it: As in some Kingdomes, (and particularly here in *England*) though Veins of courser Metalls may belong to the Owner of the Soil they grow in, yet all the Mines of the

the more perfect Metalls (as Gold and Silver) are by the Law made Mines Royal, and belong to the King, to whom their value appropriates them. By reflecting upon this peculiar Notion of Love, you may be pleas'd, *Lindamor*, to interpret ſuch Indefinite Expreſſions as you may meet with in the following Diſcourſe. And this Love, I have taken the freedom to ſtyle *Seraphick Love*, (not out of any affectation of Tumid Words or Titles, but) borrowing the name from (if the Romiſh Divines be good Marſhals of the Heavenly Hoſt) thoſe Nobler Spirits of the Cœleſtial Hierarchie, Whoſe Name in the Language to which it belongs, expreſſes them to be of a Flaming nature; and whoſe imployment (mentioned in the * Evangelical Prophet's Myſterious Viſion) ſufficiently points at the Divine Object, to which the flames, that warm them, aſpire and tend. And me-thinks, *Lindamor*, that you ſhould find it no faint Invitation to embrace *Seraphick Love*, that you may have the Advantage, by making your ſelf a Rival to

* The Name *Seraphim*, In Hebrew, ſprings from the Root *Saraph*, which ſignifies to burn or flame: Whence, *Numb.* 21. 6. thoſe pernicious creatures, that our Tranſlators Engliſh, *Fiery Serpents*, are ſtyled in the Original *Hannechaſim has-ſeraphim.*

* Iſa. 6. 2, 3.

to these glorious Spirits; to make them your friends, and the Honor to be ingaged in a Service, where you are sure of such illustrious concurrents. At least if you be of the mind of that generous youth, (to whose successful valour the conquer'd World was both Theatre and Trophie) who refus'd to run at the Olympick Games, because there were no Monarchs to run with him. But I fear, *Lindamor*, I have a little digress'd; since I might have told you in fewer words, that it is not my design, in this paper, to declaim against Love in general, or make a solemn Harangue of the Ficklenes of Women; and that therefore, as when young Gallants (such as you, *Lindamor*) are subject to cast away their Love upon unfit objects, their discreet friends, (sensible of the truth of the Italian Comick's observation, that

Onestà contra' amore
E troppo frale schermo
In giovinetto cuore.

In youthful Hearts bare Vertues
wont to prove
But a weak shield against the
darts of Love.)

without

without taking any more than neceſſary notice of their former fond and ſtragling Paſſions, reclaim them, by either matching them, or at leaſt (in order thereunto) engaging their Addreſſes to Perſons, whoſe Beauty or Prerogatives may both legitimate and confine their affections: So I ſhall now endeavour to prevent the future Gaddings of your Love to Objects, that cannot deſerve ſo tranſcendent and diſintereſt a one, as I have obſerv'd yours to have been; by preferring and engaging it to the True Object that Paſſion was born to, the Nobleſt it can aſpire to, and the moſt Satisfying it can enjoy. Yes, *Lindamor*, as it has hitherto been my not-unproſperous Task to Unhood your Soul, I ſhall now make it my buſineſs to ſhew her Game to fly at. I ſee that Love in *Lindamor* is too Noble and Predominant an Affection, to be either Eaſie or Fit to be deſtroy'd. It will therefore be my deſign, not to Suppreſs your flame, but to Addreſs it. I wiſh'd it withdrawn from *Hermione*, not to Annihilate it, but to Transfigure it: I would not have a Paſſion which wanted nothing, but a due Object, to be *Seraphick Love*, like Vulgar men, be ſwallow'd up by Death, the common fate;

fate: But be ennobled by a deſtiny like that of *Enoch* and *Elias*, who, having ceas'd to converſe with Mortals, Dy'd not, but were Tranſlated into Heaven.

Sect. 2. What has been ſaid already, *Lindamor*, hath, it ſeems, ſuffic'd to rectifie your Love; by Diſabuſing it, and ſhewing you, how unfitly it was plac'd on its former Objects. Your proficiency in That, invites me to proceed with you to a new Leſſon, and (mindful of that true Saying of an Eminent Father, *Nemo aliquem amat, quem non vult eſſe meliorem*) to endeavour to exalt your paſſion by Directing and Setling it upon an Object, the due Contemplation of whoſe Lovelineſs may cure as perfectly all hurts received from any Mortal Beauty, as antiently the Sight of the Myſterious Serpent on the Pole did cure the hurts the fiery Serpents gave. For, ſince to gaze ſtedfaſtly on an outward Beauty, where all your looking will but diſcover the ſame face, is found ſo effectual to Kindle or to Blow the fire of Love, (which the *Greeks* prettily enough expreſs by their ἐκ τῆς ὁρᾶν γίνεται τὸ ἐρᾶν) how much muſt a due Contemplation enamour us of that Divine, and, though Refulgent, yet ever more and more Diſcoverable

Numb. ca. 21. v. 8, 9.

coverable Object, where Attention and Wonder ſtill mutually excite and cheriſh each other? Whence the zealouſeſt and perfecteſt Lovers of God are the glorious Angels, of whom our Saviour ſayes, that in Heaven, *they alwayes behold the face of his Father which is in Heaven*; and thoſe bleſſed Saints, whoſe imployment, and whoſe happineſs is, in the *Revelation*, expreſt to be, *To follow the Lamb whitherſoever he goes.* And thoſe unblemiſh'd Perſons are in that place recorded to have kept themſelves Undefiled by mortal Beauties; to teach us, that the nearer and clearer Intuition, that Heaven affords them of the glorious Object of their Paſſion, was, not the Cauſe of it, but the Recompence; and that whilſt they liv'd Exiles here on Earth, 'twas ſuch a ſpeculation, as I am recommending (*Lindamor*) to You, wherewith they liv'd (to borrow the Expreſſion uſed of *Moſes*) *as ſeeing him who is inviſible*; a Sight, whoſe Glory made them look on fading Beauties, with as undazel'd and untroubl'd Eyes, as Eagles can be ſuppos'd to caſt on Gloworms when they have been newly gazing on the Sun.

Matth. 18. 20.

Rev. 14. 4.

Heb. 11. 27.

To engage your Love, *Lindamor*, to this *Sect.* 3.

this ſublimeſt of objects, I ſhall deſire, that all that I have ſaid to divert your former flames, and all that may ſay to depreciate and diſcredit thoſe degrading and diſquieting Amours, that are wont to inveagle Mortals, may be lookt upon as meant, rather by way of Preparative, than of motive, aiming but to diſabuſe and rectify your Mind, that with compos'd and unprepoſſeſs'd thoughts, you may judge of the object I propoſe to you. Which, to qualifie you to be but impartial to, this method ſeem'd expedient; being but imploy'd upon ſuch a ſcore, as that on which the Platoniſts us'd to premiſe certain virtues, which they (ſignificantly enough) call'd Purgative, to diſpoſe and fit the mind for the reception of ſublimer truths. As Phyſitians to cleer the ſight are wont to purge the head, that the eye freed from all darkning and diſguiſing Tinctures, may the more perfectly diſcern the objects preſented to it. And certainly, the Love I would perſwade, is of a nature, that makes nothing more conducive to it than the greateſt uncloudedneſs of the Eye, and the perfecteſt illuſtration of the object: which is ſuch, that the cleareſt reaſon is the moſt advantagious

Light

Light it can desire to be seen by. You know the Story of that witty Wench, who us'd merrily to wish her Lover all good Qualities, but a good Understanding; for That, said she, would make them out of Love with me. The Divine Object, to which I would Prefer you, *Lindamor*, is so far from being obnoxious to a Danger of that Nature, that I need not Disparage any other to Enamour you of this. For, the Creator is too full of Excellencies to need to be recommended or set off by the Creature's Defects. He was soverainly Lovely in Himself, before they had a Being; nor has his giving us that Passion, call'd Love, made him the unfitter Object for it. To love God, but because your Mistriss has personal faults, is a greater, than any of those for which you have declin'd her; and is such a Solœcism in *Seraphick Love*; as it were in the Persian Religion, (for that has yet embracers in the East, as those, that have there convers'd with them, assure me) to make the Spots that blemish the Moon their Motives of their worshipping the Sun. *Hermione* is a Lady, to whose noble Relations I am too much a Servant, not to have a Respect for Her; and I cannot,

without concluding her an Extraordinary person, remember how lately she enjoy'd the honour of Captivating *Lindamor*; and though she has since, by injuriously Declining, justly forfeited the glorious Title of his Mistress; yet the Qualities, that gave it her, made me, among divers others, like her so well, that 'tis now my Quarrel to her, that she Is not what she Was. And therefore what ever may fall from my Pen to her disadvantage, relates to Her but as she was, or may again be, an Obstacle to your devotedness to *Seraphick Love*. To ingage you to which, (all this notwithstanding, *Lindamor*) I must do you the right to tell you, that God deserves the highest Elevation of your Love, though *Hermione* had not rejected it. Were she not only as Handsome as you fancy'd her, but as Constant as you wish'd her, her Beauty, and her Friendship too concurring, could not have made her other than as Disadvantageous as Injurious, a Rival unto God; and, in the very Fruition of as obliging Returns as her Kindness could have made your Passion, she would have deserv'd but a more moderate Degree of it. Angels, to whom Women were never false, or cruel,

el, love their Maker above all things: and he to whom St. *John* preſents his Adoration, refuſed it for himſelf to direct it unto God. Would not your ſelf, *Lindamor*, have thought your *Hermione* abſolutely handſome, though Moors had not worn the Devils Livery; and the thing call'd deformity, had been as much a ſtranger, as it is unwelcome to her Sex? 'tis true, ſuch is our frailty, that, As the *Iſraelites* needed a cruel and oppreſſive bondage in *Egypt*, to make them reſolve on returning to the Bleſſed Land of *Canaan*; ſo oftentimes, the amorous Soul needs the harſh uſage of a diſdainful Miſtreſs, to diſguſt it with its Thraldom, and make it aſpire to its more genuine and ſatisfying object. I may therefore allow *Hermonie*'s defects to have given you freedom and occaſion to conſider the Prerogatives of *Seraphick Love*: but I muſt not allow them to be the chief Motives of your embracing it. For, it were too injurious to its glorious object, to make that but the refuge of a defeated paſſion, whoſe tranſcendency entitles it to more than the moſt elevated and entire one. Alas, God needs not theſe beggerly Parallels with any fading objects, to be-

Rev. 22. 4. & 19. 1.

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come that of our disabus'd Devotion, and he were lovely without comparison, as well as he is so above it. And though I be not so unjust to deny, that there are Ladies (some of which I have the happiness not to be unknown to my self) whose Excellencies are capable to ennoble their whole Sex: Yet their greatest accomplishments, compar'd to his perfections, whose gifts they are, are in that eclipsing company, as inconspicuous as the faint Qualities of more ordinary persons. As when in a clear morning, the Rising-Sun vouchsafes to visit us, as well those bright Stars that did adorn our Hemisphere, as those dark shades that did benight it, vanish: Consonantly whereunto, give me leave to observe to you, *Lindamor*, that though divers of God's Attributes, are, through his goodness, participated by his Creatures, yet the Scripture makes so vast a disparity betwixt the excellencies that it ascribes to Men, and the same perfections consider'd as they exist in God, that it seems absolutely to exclude Created Beings from any Title to those Attributes; because they possess them but in a way so inferior to that transcendent, peculiar, and Divine manner,

manner, in which they belong to God. Thus our Saviour ſays to him that (taking him but for a Man) call'd him good, *Why calleſt thou me good? there is none good but one*, (that is,) *God*. Thus St. *Paul* calls God (or Chriſt) the only Potentate, μόνος δυνάστης, though the Earth be ſhared by ſeveral Potentates; and even the devout *Eunuch* in the *Acts*, and the depoſed Grandees mentioned by the Bleſſed Virgin in her Canticle, are, in the Original, ſtyled Potentates. Thus, though there be wiſe Virgins as well as fooliſh; and though our Saviour tells us, That *the Children of this World, are, in their generations, wiſer than the Children of Light*: Yet S. *Paul* ſcruples not to tearm his Maker, *The only wiſe God*; and thus he elſe-where Paraphraſes him, *He that hath only immortality*, though Angels and humane Souls be deathleſs. In ſo incommunicable a manner does the ſuperiority of God's Nature make him poſſeſs thoſe very excellencies, which the diffuſiveneſs of his Goodneſs, makes him pleaſed to communicate. I am the more zealous, *Lindamor*, to transfigure your Love into Devotion, (which I muſt deſire you to look upon but as a vary'd name for

Mat. 19. 16. 19.
2 Tim. 6. 15.
Acts 8. 17.
Luk. 1. 52.
Mat. 25. 5.
Luk. 16. 8.
1 Tim. 1. 17.
1 Tim. 6. 18.

Seraphick Love) becauſe I have obſerved your paſſion to have been extreamly impatient of confinement, and to have eſteem'd whatever may be tearm'd limits to be priſons. Few therefore can need more, or deſerve better, an object for their Love, for which too immenſe a vaſtneſs were impoſſible. And ſuch a one is God, whoſe Soveraign perfections render him ſo uncapable of being lov'd too much, that the moſt aſpiring paſſion can ſcarce arrive (ſo much, as) to leſſen its diſproportion to the object. Other Paſſions, like other Rivers, are moſt lik'd when they calmly flow within their wonted Banks: but of *Seraphick Love*, as of *Nilus* the very Inundations might be deſirable, and his overflowings make him the more welcome. For mortal Beauties, our paſſions are like our ſelves: if our ſtature chance to exceed a certain ſize or Standard, it makes us monſtrous; but devotion is like a flawleſs Diamond, where the bigneſs taxes the value, and the unuſual bulk both rates and inhances the luſtre and the price. To give God all our love is the greateſt Command both of the Law and Goſpel (in its capacious and teeming womb, both com-

Compriſing and Cheriſhing all the other Services God requires) and that there is not more exacted of us, is not, that an Addition were Culpable, but becauſe it is Impoſſible. So noble is the nature of Devotion, that it admits of failings but by one of the Extremes, which is that of Defect. For, Mediocrity, (whoſe Office 'tis to reſtrain us from approaching the utmoſt Limits) which in other Paſſions is an Excellence, is here an Imperfection. Or, at leaſt, if Mediocrity be that which creates Paſſions Virtues, the Mediocrity of this Love muſt conſiſt in the Boundleſsneſs of it, ſince that is it which makes it moſt a Virtue. The Man after God's own heart is not afraid to own even to his Maker an ardency of Love for Him, which muſt be expreſt by the ſignificant Metaphor of Thirſt; and that ſuch a Thirſt too, as makes the panting Hart (by Naturaliſts obſerved to be a very Dry Creature) *bray* (as I remember the Hebrew hath it) for thoſe refreſhing ſtreams, whoſe want diſtreſſes and reduces her to an almoſt gaſping condition: *My* very *Soul* (ſaith he) *thirſteth for God.* And we know, that Thirſt is not only ſo violent an appetite, that it

Pſal. 42. 1. *Cervina cdro ſicca eſt*, &c. Sennert. *Inſti. De Alimentor. facultatibus*, lib. 4. part. 1. cap. 3.

verſ. 2.

leſſens the Wonder of that Monarch's Bargain, whom Hiſtory records to have parted with his Kingdom for a Cup of Water: But thirſt doth ſo confine our Longings to what it craves, that nothing elſe can ſatisfie them. The wealth of both the *Indies* would not excuſe the want of a needed Cup, ſuppoſe their Poſſeſſor tormented with an Appetite, which cannot be quench'd but by Drink. To which I muſt add, that the uneaſineſs of unrelieved Thirſt, is not, like that of other inconveniencies, leſſen'd by Continuance, but grows, by Laſting, the more Unſupportable. The ſame inſpir'd Poet ſcruples not alſo to profeſs ſo ſenſible and ſo active a Concern for God's Intereſts, that the *zeal of God's Houſe had eaten him up*; and hugely troubled he is, that others are not affected with the ſame Zeal. *I beheld* (ſayes he) *the Tranſgreſſors, and was grieved, becauſe they kept not thy Word.* Nay, *Rivers of waters*, ſayes he, *run down mine Eyes, becauſe they kept not thy Law*; and, to manifeſt how much the tenderneſs and unreſerv'dneſs of his Love, made him think thoſe his friends or enemies, that were ſo to God, *Mine eyes* (ſays he) *ſhall be upon the faithful of the Land, that they may dwell with*

Pſal. 119. 153.

Ibidem, v. 136.

Pſal. 101. 6.

me

me: He that walketh perfect in the way, he ſhall ſerve me. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate Thee, and am not I grieved with thoſe, that riſe up againſt Thee? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine enemies. At this Rate did pious *David* love his Maker; but he was ſo far from thinking this Rate Exceſſive, that, tranſported by the ſenſe of his Perſonal Diſability to pay that Divine Object all the Love that his Perfections merited; he is not content to rouſe up all his own faculties to Praiſe God, (*Bleſs the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me bleſs his Holy Name*) but he invites all the Godly to aſſiſt him in the Payment of ſo vaſt a Debt. (*Love the Lord all ye Saints*, for &c.) And again, (*Praiſe the Lord, all ye Nations, praiſe him all ye People.*) And not content neither frequently to do this, as may appear by very many paſſages of his Sacred Poems, he extends his Invitation to the Angels, and all the other Hoſts of God, and concludes the Book of Pſalms, with a, *Let every thing that hath breath praiſe the Lord.* Hallelujah.

Pſal. 139. 21, 22.

Pſal. 103. 1.

Pſal. 117. 1.

Pſal. 138. 2.

Nor does it invalidate what has now been delivered, that ſome Men have, even by Devout Perſons, been blam'd for

Sect. 4.

for too much Devotion: for, it was not an excesse of Love; but a want of Discretion, that was guilty of their faults; The Expressions of our Love to God ought to be regulated, not by our blind and wild Phancies, but by his revealed Will, (as *Christ* sayes, *If you love me, keep my Commandments*) and therefore it is very possible to be Too devout, not because any Expression of *Seraphick Love* can be made with too much Ardency, whilst 'tis consider'd abstractedly in it self, and irrelatively to the rest; But because that there being several duties of Love, which require an Ardency of it, 'tis injurious to exercise all that in one alone, or a few, that belongs equally to the neglected others. We must not (as too many Professors are now wont to do, of whose error you may receive a fuller account in some other Papers) dash in pieces the two Tables of the Law against one another; But must so *love God with all our hearts, as to love our Neighbour as our selves.* You know what our Saviour saith to the Pharisees, that Tithed Mint, and Cummin, with a neglect of Judgment, Mercy, and Faith, those weightier matters of the Law; *These ought you* (δεῖ) *to have done,*

Matth. 23. 23.

done, and not to leave the other undone. And, indeed, this partiality, *Lindamor*, which makes us display so much of the strength and vigor of our Spirits in some favourite-Duties, that we can but languidly and perfunctorily perform those others we are less fond of, begets in Devotion a Disease, not unlike that new one in Children we call the *Rickets*, which some Learned Physicians do not improbably conceive to arise from the unequal nutrition of the parts. For, though none of them receive excessive nourishment, yet some of them receiving as much as is convenient for them, and thereby growing up to their natural bigness, whilst others are less nourish'd than (were the body healthful) they would be, do grow so little, that the sounder parts seem over-grown, and so the disproportion betwixt them and the Ricketing ones, makes the whole body they compose mishapen and unwieldy. But, *Lindamor*, this proves not that we can love God too much, but only that we may imploy too much of that Love, in this or that way of expressing it. Whilst we are (as *Job* speaks) *Inhabitants of these houses of clay*, there are many Duties, which

Job. 4. 19.

which do as well challenge an intensity of our affections, as those which relate more immediately to God. As
1 Cor. 7. 32, 33, 34. St. *Paul* tells us, that there is difference betwixt Married and Single persons, the affections of the one being at liberty to devote themselves more undistractedly to God, whereas those of the other are distracted; (as *Adam*'s were, betwixt his Maker and his Rib.) But, where a direct and immediate expression of love to God defrauds not any other Duty, there it is free from the danger of Excess. Though Prayers may easily be too long, and Fasts grow exorbitant; yet Christ could spend the whole night in Prayer, and Fast forty dayes without immoderateness, when the other expresions of his Love to his Father, and the other exercises of his Mediatory Function, were not thereby disturb'd, but further'd and promoted.
1 King. 19. 2. And so *Elijah* might inculpably fast long, when that fasting did not disable him to prosecute his journey to the Mount of God; and though just men here on Earth must express their Love to their Master by (that busie distracting, and remoter way of service) tradeing with his Talent trusted to them; yet

yet when their diveſture of Morality diſpenſes them from thoſe laborious and avocating duties to diſtreſſed Chriſtians, and their own ſecular Relations, which are here requiſite to be perform'd; their glorify'd ſpirits may now, without any immoderate devotion, imploy, I ſay not, their time, but their Eternity it ſelf, in converſing with God, and following the Lamb whitherſoever he goes. And congruouſly I obſerve, that the four myſterious Beaſts, allow'd to approach neareſt to the Throne of God, though their many wings, and more numerous eyes, intimate them of a very active nature, are repreſented to us in the Apocalypſe, as addicted but to one imployment, ceaſing *neither day nor night from ſaying Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty*; and from *giving Glory, and Honor, and Thanks unto him.* And of *thoſe that have whited their Robes in the blood of the Lamb*, this account is in the ſame Book given us, *that they are before the Throne of God, and ſerve him day and night in his Temple.* So true is it, that no degree of *Seraphick Love* can be exceſsive, nay, not any expreſsion of it immoderate, unleſs it be made ſo, not by its greatneſs, but by its uſurpation,

Rev. 4. 6, 7.

Ver. 8.

Rev. 7. 14, 15.

pation, whereby it either ingroſſes or invades what belongs to its injur'd and languiſhing aſſociates. Our Love unto the Creatures is a preſent, but unto God it is a Tribute, and though we may eaſily play the Prodigals in parting (over-freely) with our Gifts, we can ſcarce be ſo in the payment of our Debts; for, be the ſums never ſo vaſt we pay away, their being due, in ſpite of their being great, makes the Diſburſement too much an Act of Juſtice, to be one of Profuſeneſs. *Seraphick Love*, (whoſe paſſionateneſs is its beſt complexion) has then moſt approach'd its nobleſt meaſure, when it can leaſt be meaſur'd: nor ought its extent to admit any other limits than an utter diſability to exceed thoſe that terminate it. For he alone loves God as much as he ought, that loving him as much as he can, ſtrives to repair the deplor'd imperfection of that Love, with an extream regret to find his Love no greater. Such a ſublimity of Love will beſt entitle you to the Conſolation accruing from that memorable paſſage of St. *John*, where he ſays, that *God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him*, which ſupplies me with a forcible

1 Joh. 4. 16.

forcible Inducement, to invite you to an eager aſpiring to a Tranſcendency in Devotion, ſince it may render Self-denial ſo eaſie, that 'twill (at laſt) almoſt diveſt that name. For, this ſublimer Love being, by an intimate conjunction with its Object, wholly devoted to it, and throughly refined from all baſe droſs of ſelfiſhneſs and intereſt, nobly begets a moſt ſtrict Union of our Wills with God's (or rather) a perfect Submiſſion of the one to the other. And thus, when it is become Your Will to obey His, no diſpenſations of Providence will immoderately diſquiet you, for, you poſſeſs your Wiſhes in General, and in Bulk, though poſſibly not alwayes in Retail. For, your chiefeſt Deſire being to ſee your Maker's Will fulfill'd, your knowledge of his being the Sovereign and uncontroll'd Diſpoſer of the Events, aſſures you, that all Accidents that can befall you, are but exact Accompliſhments of his Will, and conſequently of Yours, ſo far forth as that is included and compriz'd in His. When you have Reſign'd, or rather Conſign'd, your expropriated Will (if I may ſo call it) to God, and thereby (as it were) entruſted him to Will for you; all

all his Diſpoſals of, and his Diſpenſations towards you, are, in effect, the Acts of your own Will, with the advantage of their being Directed and Specified by Him. An advantage that does at once aſſure you both of their Rectitude and Succeſs. God's Wiſdom, Power, and Love to you conſider'd, how much more happy muſt you be in your Options of his chuſing for you, than your immediate own? The Patient thinks himſelf obliged to gratifie his Phyſician for chuſing for him what ſorts of Meat he is to feed on; though the Doctor be wont to make ſuch a choice for him, as deprives him of the Diſhes he beſt Likes, and oftentimes confines him to thoſe he Loaths. Alaſs, How often might God ſay of our Requeſts, as *Chriſt* did of thoſe of the two aſpiring Diſciples, *Ye know not what ye ask?* I admire, and bluſh to read in an Heathen Satyriſt ſo Heavenly a Leſſon, as,

Permittes ipſis expendere Numinibus, quid
Conveniat nobis, rebuſque ſit utile noſtris:
Nam pro Jucundis Utilia quæque dabunt Di,

Charior

Charior eſt illis homo, quam ſibi nos animorum
Impulſu, & cæca pravaque cupidine ducti,
Conjugium petimus partumque uxoris; at illis
Notum, qui pueri, qualiſque futura ſit uxor.

Unto the wiſer Gods the care permit,
Of what's for us and our affairs moſt Fit.
They will for pleaſant things the Beſt confer;
To whom Man is, than to himſelf, more dear.
We by our blinder Paſſions led aſtray.
Do for a Wife perhaps or Children pray:
Which they may chance refuſe us out of Love.
Knowing what both the Wife and Boys would prove.

The conſideration of which made a Heathan Philoſopher ſay, That he was wont only in general terms to beg Good things of the Gods, leaving it to

them to determine what things were good for him. And indeed our own Wishes are but too commonly as blind as *Rachel's*, who having so eagerly longed for Children, that she impatiently cries, *Give me Children, or else I dye,* died in Child-bearing: And as destructive to the Wishers, as their Longings prov'd to the murmuring *Israelites*, who loathing the wholesome Manna (that *Bread of Angels*) God had provided for them, are their own Bane in the Flesh they had so greedily lusted for. Thus, *Lindamor*, that so affrighting virtue of Self-denial proves to be little more than a Son's Letter of Attorney to his Father, of whose paternal Kindness and consummate Abilities in the management of affairs, his confidence amounts unto a certainty. Nay, till my second Thoughts check'd the over-forward Impetuosity of my first, I was about to add, Since God resents an infinite satisfaction in the accomplishment of his own Will, your Making over your whole Will to God, will impart to you that Felicity, proportioned to the degree of the Resignment. And as the Eye, whil'st by the Optick Nerve ty'd unto the Head, so chain'd, can taste delights, which it is dead

Gen. 35. 18.

Num. 11. 33.

dead to, being once ſever'd from it; though (otherwiſe) it enjoy the beſt condition of which its inanimate Nature can be ſuppos'd to be capable: So may your Will by an Identity or Sameneſs (in Tendency, though not in Nature) with your Makers, as 'twere Engrafted into Gods, receive a new and an enlarged capacity, which will enable you to contain and reliſh joys, highly tranſcending thoſe, which the fulleſt fruition of your private wiſhes were able to create. Thus ſelf-denial is a kind of Holy Aſſociation with God, and (by making you his Partner) intereſſes you in all his happineſs and acquiſitions. And conſonantly we ſee that Glorify'd Saints and Bleſſed Angels, whoſe Will have the moſt exquiſite and exact Conformity to Gods, enjoy a happineſs moſt approaching his; whereas the Apoſtate Spirits, in a confirm'd repugnancy to his Will, find the extremity of wretchedneſs.

But though I dare not own, *Lindamor*, ſo bold a Sally, yet I dare without ſcruple improve the diſcourſe that preceeded it, to make out to you an advantageous difference of *Seraphick Love* from ordinary Flames. For, he that makes *Sect.* 5.

a Preſent of his Heart to any Mortal Beauty, even by her welcoming it, and lodging it with her own, grows ſubject to have it wounded in her Breaſt. Thoſe misfortunes reach him that would otherwiſe terminate in her: Her afflictions torment him, whilſt his own reprieve him; and the felicity of two perſons grows requiſite to make one happy. The letting out our love to mutable Objects, doth but inlarge our hearts, and make them the wider marks for fortune, and capable of being wounded in more places: for, although Love may as well make us participate the joys, as reſent the infelicities of the parties lov'd; yet even the leaſt unhappy perſons do in ſo fickle and ſo tempeſtuous a Sea, as we all find this world, meet with ſo many more either croſs Winds, or ſtormy Guſts, than proſperous Gales; and we are ſo much more ſenſible of pain than pleaſure, (an aching Corn, though leſs than a ſickneſs, unfitting us to reliſh the otherwiſe perfect health of the whole Body) that even friendſhip it ſelf though a much calmer affection than Love, ought to be declin'd as injurious to our Quiet, did we conſider it but as a partnerſhip of fortunes, not an

an exerciſe of Virtues. But he, whoſe wiſer Love ſettles it ſelf on God, is not only by the Immutable and even Eſſential happineſs of that adorable Object, ſecur'd from participated infelicities; but finds his perſonal croſſes and diſtreſſes ſweetned, by conſidering, that what he moſt Loves is moſt Happy, and as able as willing in due time to make him ſo. And though *Seraphick Love* makes us partake but God's Felicities, yet his acceptance of it makes him reſent our ſorrows: *In all their afflictions he was afflicted*, ſays the Prophet of *God*, and of the *Iſraelites*. And ſo the Son of God, (who is ſo much One with thoſe that love him, that both he as the Head, and they as the Members, are ſometimes, as making up one Body, call'd by one Name, *Chriſt*) though as high as Heaven above the reach of perſonal or immediate perſecutions, call'd out to *Saul* for an intention of harming thoſe that lov'd him, *Saul, Saul, why perſecuteſt thou me?* And, to demonſtrate the tenderneſs of this compaſſion, the Prophet ſays to the return'd *Iſraelites*, concerning God, *He that toucheth you, toucheth the Apple of his Eye.* Nor is God's Compaſſion like a Miſtreſſes, a grieving only,

Eſa. 63. 3.

1 Cor. 12. 12.

Zach. 2. 8.

and an uſeleſs Pity, whereby the ſuffering Lover is oftentimes leſs comforted, as it proceeds from her kindneſs, than afflicted, becauſe it breeds her diſquiet; but God's is a compaſſion, though active, yet Serene, and worthy of himſelf, which, without producing the diſcompoſure, produces the effects of the moſt ſenſible pity, by engaging him to a timely relief and reſcue: As that freſhly mentioned expreſſion, *In all their afflictions he was afflicted*, is immediately follow'd by, *and the Angel of his preſence ſaved them; in his love, and in his pity, he redeemed them, and he bare them and carried them all the days of old.* Yes, this pity, for its not diſturbing God's happineſs, enclines him not the leſs to expreſs a ſenſe of our miſeries, and makes us find (to uſe a Scripture Phraſe as I would render it) χάριν εἰς εὔκαιρον βοήθειαν Heb. 4. 16. *Grace for an opportune relief*, I ſay, with the Divine Writer, *an oppportune* or *ſeaſonable relief*; becauſe it comes not always when it is moſt deſired; but when it is moſt fit; and when that is, he that hath at once all preſent, paſt, and future things in his proſpect, is fitteſt to determine. Chriſt's words to his Diſciples, (*It is not for you to know* Acts 1. 7.

the

the Times or the Seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power) are applicable to more Cases than that which occasion'd them. The *Canaanitish* Woman must put up a Refusal, and the Reproachful name of a Dog, (which yet by the way, was a Paraphrase commonly enough us'd by the Jews of the Heathen, and as such was understood by this Ἔθνις *Gentile not Greek*.) The *Israelites* (comprising the Patriarchs their Progenitors) were reduced to wait four hundred and thirty years, e'r they were introduced into the Promis'd Land; and during a great part of that long space of time, languish'd and groan'd under the heavy Burthens, and other as heavy Pressures, of the as cruelly as unsuccessfully Politick *Ægyptians*. St. *Paul* himself pray'd the Lord thrice for the removal of that rude σκόλοψ τῇ σαρκὶ, *Thorn to the flesh* (whatever that may mean.) Nay, of the Blessed Virgin-Mother her self, her Divine Son would not be found till the third Day, though she sought him sorrowing. And *Lazarus*, to whom, even during his Sickness, he vouchsafed (a Title, to which all *Cæsars* were but Trifles) the style of Friend, which emboldned the pious *Mary* to Paraphrase him

Mat. 7. 27.

The Text refers her extraction to *Syrophœnicia*, the same Region with *Canaan*.

Gal. 3. 17.

Ezek. 28. 24.

2 Cor. 12. 7.

Luk. 2, 48.

Joh. 11, 2.

vers. 3. by a, *He whom thou lov'st*) was permitted not only to Lye a dying, but to Dye; his Rescue being deferr'd, till it was thought impossible; and was so indeed to any less Power than Omnipotence. Which manifests, that as no degree of Distress is unrelievable by his Power, so no Extremity of it is inconsistent with his Compassion, no, not with his Friendship. He whose Spirit inspired the Pro-

Mal. 3.3. phets, is in the last of them represented under the notion of a Refiner: and 'tis not the custom of Refiners to snatch the belov'd Metal, out of the Fire, as soon as it feels the violence of that purifying Element, nay, nor as soon as it is Melted by it, but they let it long endure the brunt of the active Flames, acuated by exciting Blasts, till it have stood its due time in the Fire, and there obtain'd its full Purity and Splendor. And I hope, you will give one that converses with Furnaces, though he be no Pretender to the Philosophers Stone, leave to improve a Chimical Metaphor, and observe, that though in Afflictions, especially National or Publick Calamities, God oftentimes seem to make no distinction betwixt the Objects of his Compassion, and those of his Fury, indiscriminately involving

involving them in the ſame Deſtiny; yet his Pre-ſcience and intentions make a vaſt difference, where his Inflictions do not ſeem to make Any: As, when on the ſame Teſt, and with the ſelf-ſame Fire, we urge as well the Gold, as the blended Lead, or Antimony; but with fore-knowing and deſigning ſuch a diſparity in the Events, as to Conſume the ignobler Minerals, or blow them off into Droſs or Fumes, and make the Gold more pure and full of Luſtre.

It is true, *Lindamor*, and (not to be ſuſpected of Partiality towards a Love which ſo little needs it, to be thought fit to be preferr'd before all other Paſſions) I ſhall acknowledge it, that the Happineſs reſulting from thoſe many Prerogatives, I have endeavor'd to diſcover to you in a Tranſcendent degree of *Seraphick Love*, is moderated by the Effects of that Sublimity) the Eager Deſires it creates of a more compleat Fruition, of its perfect and Divine Object. Such aſpiring Sallies of the longing Soul made the languiſhing Spouſe in the *Canticles* cry out, *Stay me with Flaggons, comfort me with Apples, for I am ſick of Love.* Such made the raviſh'd Apoſtle deſire *to return* (for ſo I ſhould rather tranſlate

Sect. 6.

Cant. 2. 5.

Phil. 1. 23.

translate the word ἀναλῦσαι there, and so I find it * elsewhere to signifie) *and to be with Christ*: And the Inspir'd Poet thus expresses his longings to the Blessed Object of them, *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my Soul after thee, O God. My Soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: When shall I come and appear before God?* But, *Lindamor*, it was fit that to elevate our thoughts and wishes to Heaven, some peculiar, and elsewhere Incommunicable degree of Joy, should be reserv'd for us there. And 'tis a good sign, and such as worldly Objects cannot boast, when the Incompleatness of our Seraphick Lover's happiness in his fruitions, proceeds not from their want of Satisfactoriness, but his want of an Entirer Possession of them. And let me tell you, *Lindamor*, that even this uneasie State of Separation, is sweetned with as much Allay as is consistent with its being a Grief. For, the Divine Evidence and Teacher of Gods Love, pronouncing a Thirst after Perfection to be a Title to it, (according to those Scriptures, *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be satisfied.* And, *Let him that is a thirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of Life freely*) and

* Luk. 12. 36.

Psal. 42. 1, 2.

Mat. 5. 6.

Rev. 22. 17.

and the joys of Heaven being so vast, that they diffuse their Nature to all the grounded hopes men have to obtain them; each new assurance is a new degree of them, and is acceptable to our hope, though uneasie to our desires. And these baitings at compleat felicity should not be more unwelcome for the present disquiet they suppose, than the contrary for the zeal they argue and the felicity they promise. For this production of the Spirit in our Hearts may be justly tearmed as the Spirit himself in Scripture is, *An earnest*; which, though by being such, it confesses it self not to be the entire sum, yet is not only a part of it, but a Pledge: And, *Lindamor*, how supportable is this thus qualify'd Allay of the Joys of *Seraphick Love*, in comparison of the disquiets and the torments that are wont to attend sensual Love? I shall not lose time to enumerate how many it is supposed to have sent to their Graves; because, though I find those Tragical Stories rife enough in Romances, yet I find them Rarities every where but in those fabulous compositures; and though I have had the curiosity to visit some of those warmer Regions, where the Flames of

2 Cor. 5.

Love

Love are thought to burn with more violence, yet (bating the Duels and the Pox) I remember not to have obſerv'd Love to have ever been the death of any man: unleſs, ſpeaking like Philoſophers, who make Reaſon the Eſſential Conſtituent form of a Man, we will affirm, that Love, by dethroning Reaſon, though it leave the Lover alive, doth kill the Man. But, though I am loath to put ſo bad a complement upon Mankind, as to ſay, That Love is wont to deſtroy mens lives; yet I think it would be no calumny to ſay, It much diſquiets them. I could ask you, How long many a Lover muſt continue a ſervant to purchaſe the Honour of being taken notice of to be ſo? and I could recruit that Queſtion with pretty ſtore of others of the like nature, but that I ſuppoſe your Memory will ſave my Pen the labour of repreſenting to you the Torments of Love, which they that feel them, would little leſs juſtly than they do frequently ſtyle Martyrdoms, if the greatneſs only, without the Cauſe and Object of Men's ſufferings, ſuffic'd to make them Martyrs. And though the Condition of Lovers be in Romances ſo dexterouſly and delightfully deſcrib'd, that not only

only ſanguine Readers are tranſported, but even I my ſelf have been ſurprized into inclinations, to admire and envy their felicity; yet when ſome I was concern'd for, have been really concern'd and engag'd in ſome adventures, my envy quickly turn'd into pity. For, the Repulſes, the Regrets, the Jealouſies, the Fears, the Abſenſes, the Deſpairs, and the reſt of the afflicting Diſquiets of Lovers; though in well-writ Romances they are ſoon read over by the diverted Peruſer; yet they are not ſo ſoon wearther'd out, nor ſo eaſily ſupported by the diſconſolate Lover, whoſe Infelicities, though they may be perhaps ſo handſomely deplor'd, as to delight the Reader; yet truſt me, *Lindamor*, 'tis a much happier condition to be free from misfortunes, than to be able to complain eloquently of them. And as I have with delight beheld a ſtorm excellently drawn by ſome rare Artiſt's Penſil; but when I was this Spring toſt by the rude winds that blew me out of *Holland*, I found a real Storm a very troubleſome and uneaſie thing: ſo the condition of a Lover, though drawn by a ſmooth Pen, is wont ſtrangely to affect and pleaſe us; yet when

when Men are really engaged in it, they find it full of hardships and disquiet. It is a much better condition to be look'd on than embrac'd; and experience gives men of it much (sadder and) more unwelcome notions than description did. Nor phancy, *Lindamor*, that the troublesomness of your sufferings in Love proceeded but from their not being acceptable to her for whom you endured them; for had your Mistriss crown'd them with Myrtle, and prov'd as kind to you as *Hymen* could have made her, yet, I fear, she could have recompenc'd you but by disabusing you, and could not have freed you from the need of happiness, but only from a mistake concerning it; For, methinks, *Lindamor*, most of these transitory Goods, that we are so fond of, may not unfitly be resembled to the sensitive Plant, which you have admir'd at *Sion-Garden*; for, as, though we Gaze on it with Attention and Wonder, yet, when we come to touch it, the Coy delusive Plant immediately shrinks in its displayed Leaves, and Contracts it self into a Form and Dimensions, disadvantageously differing from the former; which it again recovers

covers by degrees, when touch'd no more: So these Objects that charm us at a distance, and whil'st gaz'd on with the Eyes of Expectation and Desire; when a more immediate Possession hath put them into our Hands, their former Lustre vanishes, and they appear quite differing things from what before they seem'd; though after Deprivation or Absence hath made us forget their Emptiness, and we be reduc'd to look upon them again at a distance, they recover in most Mens eyes their former Beauty, and are as capable as before to inveigle and delude us. I must add, *Lindamor*, that when I compare to the Sensitive Plant most of these Transitory things, that are flatter'd with the title of Goods, I do not out of that number except most Mistresses. For, though I am no such enemy to Matrimony, as some (for want of understanding the Raillery, I have sometimes us'd in ordinary discourse) are pleas'd to think me, and would not refuse you my Advice (though I would not so readily give you my Example) to turn Votary to *Hymen*; yet I have observ'd so few Happy Matches, and so many unfortunate ones; and have so rarely seen Men love their

their Wives at the rate they did whilſt they were their Miſtreſſes; that I wonder not that Legiſlators, thought it neceſſary to make Marriages Indiſſoluble, to make them Laſting. And I cannot fitlier compare Marriage than to Lottery; for in both, he that ventures may Succeed, and may Miſs, and if he draw a Prize, he hath a rich Return of his Venture: But in both Lotteries there lies pretty ſtore of Blanks for every Prize. And for your particular, *Lindamor*, the World is much miſtaken in both your Humors, if *Hermione*'s and Yours be not ſo unſuitable, that (to make haſte from ſo nice a Subject) had ſhe juſtifi'd your expectation of her kindneſs, you would have poſſeſs'd the Perſon without poſſeſſing the Happineſs you expected: And might have found your ſelf as ſenſibly diſappointed by her Grant, as you were by her Change.

But I forget, *Lindamor*, that I reſolv'd not to inſiſt on Parallels, and therefore, inſtead of proſecuting the Diſcourſe my Pen has ſlipt into, concerning the advantages of *ſeraphick*, compar'd with ordinary Love; I ſhall venture to encourage you to the Former,

mer, by ſhewing you, that your paſt addictedneſs to the latter, may prove ſerviceable to you in it: Yes, *Lindamor*, I ſhall not ſcruple to tell you, that your ſtrong paſſion for *Hermione* may not a little facilitate your Devotion, partly by breaking all the Chains, excepting one, that faſtned your Affection to unſatisfying Objects, and reſtrain'd it from ſoaring to the ſublimeſt; and partly, by exalting your Paſſion to a Height fit for *Seraphick* Flames. For, Love hath this of Noble, that it makes us diveſt our ſelves of Selfiſhneſs, ſlight fortune, quiet, ſafety, honour, life, and all our own Concernments, when their coming into Competition with the Lov'd parties Intereſts, may render their ſacrifice acceptable to her; and makes us think Goods or Ills deſerve thoſe names, but as they come to us From or Through Her, You could ſcarce have Learn'd a better Leſſon, even from a much better Maſter; for, Love having thus accuſtom'd you to (what is thought moſt difficult in that Virtue) the Acts of Self-denial, you need almoſt but Transfer your Flames from an Inferior and Miſtaken, to their True and Nobleſt Object, and you will have exalted and refined your Love into Devo-

tion; to the latter of which, a ſublime Elevation of the firſt is ſuch a Diſpoſition, as the having formerly, by looſer Airs, and (perchance) wanton Songs, learn'd to Improve and to Command ones Voice, is, to the skill of Singing thoſe devout Hymns and Heavenly Anthems; in which the Church-Militant ſeems ambitious to emulate the Triumphant, and Eccho back the ſolemn Praiſes and Hallelujahs of the Celeſtial Quire. And, as by Hunting, though (poſſibly) we follow but ſome poor fugitive Hare, or ſome ſuch Trifling Game, we gain that Vigor, that Sufferance, and Agility, that fits us for the Toils and Military Hardſhips that are exacted in the purſuit of Glory, and of Empire: So though in Love (Devotion's Prenticeſhip) the Courted Creature be often conſiderable enough, to make our Elections fit to be numbred among ſuch as thoſe that made Love be Painted Blind; yet in the Progreſs and Conduct of our Paſſion, we contract ſuch diſ-intereſſed and reſign'd Habitudes, as, being preferr'd to ſerve Cœleſtial Objects, do excellently qualifie us for Devotion. And in effect, a fervent Love ſeems little leſs than Devotion miſ-addreſt,

addreſt, where our own very expreſſions may ſerve to diſabuſe us; For, when you give your Miſtreſs the ſtile of Goddeſs, and talk of nothing to her, but of Offering up of Hearts, Adoring, Sacrifices, Martyrdoms; does not all this imply, that though it be ſaid to Her, 'tis meant to a Divinity; which is ſo much the True and Genuine Object of Men's Love, that we cannot exalt that paſſion for any other, without inveſting it with the Notions and Attributes of God? As Children diſcloſe the inbred kindneſs they have for thoſe perſons, by calling the Babies they moſt doat upon by their dear Mother's, or lov'd Nurſes Names. And, as *Aaron*, and the revolting Jews, by juſtifying to themſelves their Adoration of the Idos they had ſet up by attributing the Title of God to what they ador'd, did tacitly acknowledge Adoration to be due only to the Deity: ſo does a Lover, by naming what he worſhips, a Divinity, tacitly confeſs the Deity to be the proper Object of that higheſt and peculiar ſtrain of Worſhip.

Exod. 32. verſ. 4, 5. In the latter of which it is expreſly ſaid that the Feaſt was proclaimed. יהוה *To Jehovah*, the peculiar name of the true God.

And this Truth, *Lindamor*, the very ſickleneſs of Lovers concurs to teſtifie: For what Men call, and think Incon- *Sect.* 8.

ſtancy, is nothing but a chaſe of perfect Beauties; which our Love fruitleſly follows and ſeeks in ſeveral Objects, becauſe he finds it not entire in any One; for, Creatures have but ſmall and obſcure fragments of it, which cannot fix, nor ſatisfie an appetite, born for, and (though unwillingly) aſpiring unto God: who is proclaim'd the true and proper Object of our Love, as well by Mens fickleneſs to Women, as the Angel's conſtancy to Him. Juſt as the trembling reſtleſsneſs of the Needle in any but the North Point of the Compaſs proceeds from, and manifeſts its inclination to the Pole; its Paſſion for which, both its Wavering and its Reſt bear equal witneſs to. That unſatisfy'dneſs with tranſitory Fruitions, that Men deplore as the Unhappineſs of their Nature, is indeed the Priviledge of it; as 'tis the Prerogative of Men not to care for, or be capable of, being pleas'd with Whiſtles, Hobby-horſes, and ſuch fond Toys as Children doat upon, and make the ſole Objects of their Deſires and Joys. And by this you may, *Lindamor*, in ſome degree, imagine the unimaginable Suavity, that the fixing of ones Love on God is able to bleſs the

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the Soul with; ſince, by ſo indulgent a Father, and competent a Judge as God himſelf, the decreed uncontentingneſs of all other goods, is thought richly repaired by its being but an aptneſs to prove a Riſe to our Love's ſetling there.

And hitherto, my deareſt *Lindamor*, I have endeavour'd to recommend unto you *Seraphick Love*, by mentioning ſome of its properties, which ſeem to relate more to the Love it ſelf, than to the Divine Object of it. But I fear you'll think I have too long entertain'd you with conſiderations, which, beſides that they are not altogether the importanteſt that belong to this diſcourſe, I have been, by haſte reduc'd to Pen in the unaccurate Order, wherein they offer'd themſelves to my thoughts, not the Method wherein I ſhould have preſented them to Yours. *Sect.* 9.

And therefore, *Lindamor*, ſince the Nobleſt and Supreme Motives to the Love of God conſiſt in his own infinite Perfections and Prerogatives; and ſince the Properties of God's Love to us do advantage us much more, (and conſequently are likelier to endear Devotion to us) than thoſe of ours to Him: The former not only moving God to kin- *Sect.* 10.

dle in us, but to cherish and Foment, and (if our own wilful extinction interpose not) to Crown the latter: For both these Reasons, I say, *Lindamor*, I doubt not but you'll think it seasonable for me to proceed, to consider that higher sort of Motives to Devotion, and to evince, that the several things which are wont most to engage and heighten our affections, do, in a peculiar and transcendent manner, shine forth and Constellate in God. That, you know, which enamour'd you of *Hermione*, I need not prove to you, to have been your supposing her full of Lovelinesse and Excellencies in her self; and your believing, that the Love she vouchsafed you was Great, Free, Constant, or Advantageous to you. And that all these properties do not only eminently exist, but illustriously concurr in God, and his Love; I must now, *Lindamor*, (with strong desires of doing it prosperously) attempt to manifest.

Sect. 11. First then, our highest Love is made God's due by the Excellency and Prerogative of his Nature. But, trust me, *Lindamor*, when necessitated by a Method exacted by the nature of this discourse (I find my self enagaged to say some-

ſomething by way of celebration of God's Perfections: I am very ſenſible, I can but detract from what I deſire to Praiſe, and muſt inevitably appear unable to ſpeak Worthily of a Theme, to which even *Seraphims* themſelves cannot do Right. And if, as the Scripture aſſures us, thoſe things even fell under the Senſes, nor entred the Thoughts of Men, which God has reſerv'd for thoſe that love him; how ineffable and incomprehenſible muſt thoſe things be which he has reſerv'd for Himſelf? the infinite Superiority of his Nature above all Created Beings, placing a vaſt diſparity betwixt his greateſt communicated Vouchſafements, and his Boundleſs, and therefore to Creatures Incommunicable, Perfections. 1 Cor. 2. 9.

Wonder not therefore, *Lindamor*, that my weak Eyes dare not dwell long upon an Object, which they cannot ſtedfaſtly gaze on long without being dazl'd: And do not marvel, that I ſcruple not to uſe ſeeming Hyperboles in the mention of Perfections, which make the higheſt Hyperboles but ſeeming ones: Both God's Nature and his Word declaring him to be *exalted above all Bleſſing and Praiſe.* If it were ſeaſonable, Neh. 9. 5.

Lindamor, to entertain our ſelves but with thoſe Attributes of God, which are Legible or Conſpicuous in the Creation; We might there diſcern the admirable Traces of ſuch immenſe Power, ſuch unſearchable Wiſdom, and ſuch exuberant Goodneſs, as may juſtly raviſh us to an Amazement at them, rather than a bare Admiration of them. And I muſt needs acknowledge, *Lindamor*, that when with bold Teleſcopes I ſurvey the Old and Newly diſcover'd Stars and Planets that adorn the upper Region of the World; and when with excellent Microſcopes I diſcern in otherwiſe inviſible Objects, the unimitable Subtilty of Nature's curious Workmanſhip; and when, in a word, by the help of Anatomical Knives, and the light of Chimical Furnaces, I ſtudy the Book of Nature, and conſult the Gloſſes of *Ariſtotle*, *Epicurus*, *Paracelſus*, *Harvey*, *Helmont*, and other learn'd Expoſitors of that Inſtructive Volume; I find my ſelf oftentimes reduc'd to exclaim with the Pſalmiſt, *How manifold are thy Works, O Lord?* in *Wiſdom haſt thou made them all!* And when I have been loſing my ſelf in admiration of what I underſtand not, but enough

Pſal. 104. 24.

to

to Admire, and not to Comprehend; I am often obliged to interrupt or break off my Enquiries, by applying to the Works of God's Creation the Expreſſion us'd by St. *Paul*, of thoſe of his Providence, *O the depth of the Riches, both of the Wiſdom and knowledge of God! how unſearchable are his judgments, and his ways untraceable!* And Exclamations of this Nature may the attentive Conſideration of any other of Gods Attributes deſervedly produce. But having elſewhere treated of this Subject in a peculiar Diſcourſe, I ſhall now, *Lindamor*, invite you to conſider with me, how much You, and thoſe that are Conſcious to their having Virtue enough in themſelves, to make them prize it in others, are in love with *Cato*, *Scipio*, and thoſe other *Heroes*, that did Ennoble, and almoſt Exceed Mankind, upon the bare knowledge of their Virtues; although from them we derive no perſonal advantage, (their death having numerous Ages preceded our Nativity.) Since then we pay ſo much diſintereſt love to ſome few faint and ill-refin'd Virtues, that ne'r did profit us; how much on ſuch a Score, and at that Rate, ſhould we love him, who ſo poſſeſſes all Perfection, that each of his Perfections is Infinite? Were you and I

Rom. 11. 33.

our

our own Creators, *Lindamor*, and wholly independent upon God, without either Need or Hope to taſte his Bounty; his native Excellencies, and what he has done for others, ſhould ſurely Raviſh us, and Enamour us of Him. Though his Benefits to us did not entitle him to our Love, his Eſſence (the Source and only Motive of thoſe Benefits) would give him a Right to it; and though we ow'd him nought for what we are, we yet ſhould owe him Love for what he is. He is that glorious Sun, From whom (as Beams) all created Perfections flow, and in whom they all concentre. To omit God's Soveraign Majeſty, (which places him ſo high: that but to own for him ſo Familiar and Levelling an affection as Love, much more to expect to be Relov'd by Him, were not the leaſt ſawcy Preſumption Man could be guilty of, did not his own Commands make it a Duty) Not to inſiſt on this, I ſay, Let us a while conſider that proper and peculiar attraction of Love, his Lovelineſs; which is ſuch, that, did we but once ſee it, all Creature-competitions (even we being Judges) would then be as impoſſible as they are now unjuſt. In *the Fifth Evangeliſt*'s Prophetick Viſions, the Seraphims them-

Iſa. 6. 7.

themſelves (thoſe glorious ornaments of the Cœleſtial Hierarchy) are repreſented as covering their faces in God's preſence, either bluſhing at their Comparative Deformity, or unable to ſuſtain the unqualifi'd ſplendor of ſo Divine brightneſs; whence perhaps it became of old the Jewiſh faſhion (as ſome frequent expreſſions in their Writers intimate) when they went to pray, to veil their heads and faces; (though now I have in their Synagogue ſeen them onely cover their head, not their faces, with thoſe white Garments they wear at their publick Devotions.) And, *Lindamor*, if *Moſes*'s face, by but a few days converſe with God, reflected ſuch a Light as dazl'd mortal Eyes; and if his ſwift Poſts the Angels, when ſent on Errands to us here on Earth, even when they may be ſuppos'd (if I may ſo ſpeak) to wear their travelling Cloaths, and ſtood as much to our frailty in the Form, as the Region, they appear to us in, do, in ſpight of that darkning Condeſcenſion, ſo much Tranſcend all Objects here on Earth, that the Scripture often mentions, that even thoſe that aſpir'd to imitate their Virtues, were confounded at their preſence: And if, in this veiling habit, they appear ſo glorious

that

that their thus disadvantaged Beauty is made the Complement and Hyperbole of that Quality; what may we, or rather, what may we not conclude of God him-
Psal. 94. 9. self, of whom the Scripture says, *He that planted the Ear shall he not hear? he that formed the Eye shall he not see?* That is, he that imparts a Faculty, or an Excellence to the Creature, shall not he himself much more eminently possess it? and in effect, the most unblemished Created Beauties are but faint shadows, (or trulier, Foils) of His. Those drops of Prettiness, scatteringly sprinkled amongst the Creatures, were design'd to Defecate and Exalt our Conceptions, not to Inveigle or Detein our Passions; for, God did ne'er intend them to terminate our Love, but only by our Eyes to exalt our Faith above them, and by the Beauties our sight can apprehend to raise us to a confidence, that there is in their Author more than we can either See or Comprehend.
2 King. 2. 11. Like *Elijah*'s fiery Chariots, though they be pure and bright, and consist of the noblest and gloriousest Materials, they are
Gen. 24. 10--55. meant by God but to carry us up to Him. And as the Patriarchs Steward was furnish'd with so sumptuous an Equipage to court *Rebecca*, not for himself, but for

Isaac

Isaac; ſo all the Lovelineſs imparted to the Creature is lent it, but to give us ſome more large Conceptions of that vaſt Confluence and Immenſity that exuberates in God. To make the righteſt uſe of fading Beauties, you muſt conſider God and them, as you were wont to do your Miſtreſſes Picture, and its Chryſtal Cover: Where, though that native Glaſs were Pure and Lovely, and very richly edg'd, yet to gaze on it, was not the chiefeſt buſineſs of your Eye; nor did you in it terminate your ſight, but greedily look through and beyond it, upon the adored Image that ſolid veil betraid. Methinks *Seraphick* and our common *Lovers* behold exterior Beauties with a difference reſembling that wherewith Children and Aſtronomers conſider *Galileo*'s Optick Glaſſes, (with one of which *Teleſcopioes*, that I remember I ſaw at *Florence*, he merrily boaſted that he had, *Trovato la Corte a Giove*) which the one prizes moſt for what they appear; the other, for what they diſcover. For Children contenting themſelves to wonder at the length, and fall in love with the Workmanſhip and Gildings of the Tube, do thus but gaze upon them; whereas Aſtronomers look through them, and

ſcarce

ſcarce taking notice of the unuſual Ornaments, or the ſhape, employ them to find out unknown Lights in the Sky, and to deſcry in Heaven bright Stars, unſeen before, and other Cœleſtial Novelties and Beauties.

Sect. 12. I deny not, *Lindamor*, that God has been pleas'd to adorn ſome of his Creatures with Hints and Impreſſes, as well of his Lovelineſs as his other Excellencies; but they do much more faintly & imperfectly reſemble Him, than the counterfeit Sun we ſee ſometimes in a Cloud emulates the true one, by whoſe Refracted and Reflected Beams, ſome acute modern Naturaliſts ſuppoſe it to be produc'd. For though this Derivative Sun ſhine with a not-inconſiderable Luſtre, Comparatively to the reſt of the dark Cloud ennobles it, yet is it not only as much inferior to the true Sun in Brightneſs, as in Height; but it enjoys alone a Precarious, Dependent, and almoſt Momentary Being, which often it loſes in a very ſhort time, and never attains to preſerve a very long one. And therefore to neglect that ſupreme Reſplendency that ſhines in God, for thoſe dim Repreſentations of it, that we ſo doat in the Creature, is as præpoſterous and abſurd,

ſurd, as it were for a Perſian to offer his Sacrifice to a Parhelion (as the *Greeks* call that Meteor) inſtead of adoring the Sun. And certainly, *Lindamor*, if our Dim ſight, like that of the Prophet's Servant, who ſaw the Mountains near *Dothan* covered with Horſes and Chariots of Fire were priviledg'd to diſcern otherwiſe Inviſible Objects; our raviſh'd Eyes would behold Lovelineſs enough in God, to make us inceſſantly exclaim in the Language of the Prophet, *How great is his Goodneſs, and how great is his Beauty!* Agreeably whereunto we may obſerve, That as the Load-ſtone doth attract moſt powerfully the brighteſt Needles, made of the pureſt Steel, and thoſe that moſt approach it; ſo Angels, who, of all Created Beings, enjoy the unclouded'ſt Light, and the moſt clear Knowledge of their Maker, do love him with a Conſtancy ſo fix'd, that in five thouſand and ſome odd Centuries of years, (efflux'd ſince the Creation) they could never ſee any thing, either in God, or out of him, capable to ſeduce them to a Change. God's Lovelineſs (which is ſuch, that the eternal Fruition of himſelf Creates even his Felicity) is like rare Muſick, which, though it do delight all its partakers, the knowingſt Artiſts ſtill do

2 King. 6. 27.

Zach. 9. 17

do highlieſt Value, and are moſt raviſh'd with the Tranſports it produceth, being proportion'd to the degrees of the Skilfulneſs of its admirers. The Apoſtate Spirits indeed deſerted their firſt Station, not frighted thence by any blemiſh they deſcry'd in God; but probably fell by a ſawcy affectation of a Parity, and (as Divines tell us) a Sacrilegious aſpiring to Perfections, which they were criminally unable to behold, without wiſhing them their own. And for their preſent Separation from God, it is their Curſe and Puniſhment. And I ſhall ingeniouſly confeſs to you, *Lindamor*, that by the advantageous Idea's I entertain'd of God's Perfections, I have been ſometimes inclin'd to think, that the reaſon why God tells *Moſes*, *Thou canſt not ſee my face, for there ſhall no man ſee me and live*, might be, that (as Tranſcendent Objects deſtroy the Senſe) ſo Lovely and Glorious a Sight (whoſe continuance ſhall make our happineſs in Heaven) would let in Joys, and would create Deſires, too Mighty for frail Mortality to ſuſtain. The raviſh'd Soul being ſhewn ſuch Game as That, would hate ſo eagerly, that ſhe would break thoſe Leaſhes that tye her to the Body, (and thereby hinder her flight to that wiſh'd Union) and

Exod. 33. 20.

and the glad Heart (too narrow a Receptacle for so much Joy) to make room for such Guests, would stretch unto a Rupture, Longing, or Joy, have sometimes singly reach'd Degrees that have made them Fatal; And why then should their Union in such Extremes be thought uncapable of producing the like effect? Nor is it perchance more a Priviledge of the next Life, that we shall then see God, than that we shall survive that Glorious Sight; which is too dazling an Object for Mortal Eyes, till (to use St. *Pauls* Expression) *our mortal shall have put on immortality*. But I must no longer lose my self in a Theme, on which it is so easie to speak Much, and so impossible to say Enough. If I be not very much mistaken, they are so, who presume to give us satisfactory Definitions of Gods Nature, which we may perhaps more safely Define by the Impossibility of its being accurately Defined. And I must confess, I do the least expect the best Description of the Divine Nature, from those that are most forward to take upon them to Explicate it: For our Words being but the Representations of our Notions, and they being necessarily Finite, as our Being; few men are (me-thinks) more likely to be mistaken in the Nature of what's Infinite,

1 Cor. 15. 54.

(and consequently of God's Attributes) than those that think Descriptions can comprize it. Nor will an Assiduity and Constancy of our Speculations herein relieve us, for too fix'd a Contemplation of Gods Essence does but the more confound us. As I remember, St. *Paul* tells the *Jews*, that he *could not see for the Glory of that Light*, that shon from Heaven about him at his Conversion. And this the famous *Simonides* experimentally found, who being ask'd what God was, took a days time to consider of it; after, being call'd upon for his answer, he desir'd two days longer to think upon it; and when they were expir'd, demanded four days longer; and so continu'd a great while, each time Encreasing his demands for Respite; till, being prest to give an Account of such a Dilatory way of proceeding, he ingenuously acknowledg'd that the longer he consider'd Gods Nature, the less he comprehended it. And indeed, Experience teacheth us, that they that gaze stedfastliest on the noon-days Sun, can least of all discern what it is, being rather Dazl'd than Instructed by so confounding an Object. Nor, is it only, *Lindamor*, a Task of too great difficulty for a meer man, perfectly to Explicate that Incomprehensible Nature of God, to which

Acts 22.6. 11.

which nothing but his own Infinite Underſtanding can be adæquate: But, methinks, even to celebrate God's perfections, cannot be ſoberly attempted without a very deep ſenſe of a man's own unworthineſs and incapacity. For, the ſame Excellencies that furniſh us with Praiſes, do tranſcend them. And the fruitfulneſs of the Subject may as well deterr, as invite our Pens; ſince, as we are ſure we ſhall not want Theme, ſo we are certain we cannot Dignifie it. And for my part, *Lindamor*, though my Subject exacted of me the Praiſes I have endeavored to aſcribe to God, yet I ſhould have thought it requiſite rather to decline the Laws of Method, than be reduc'd to Derogate from what I would extol, if the neceſſity of detracting from Gods perfections were not equal to that of mentioning them; and if that neceſſity were not as Glorious to God, as greater Praiſes than we are able to aſcribe him, could be. But, *Lindamor*, having thus done right to my Method, though I could not to my Theme, I ſhall only invite you to imitate with me thoſe Perſians, that adored the Sun, though the Light he lent them ſerv'd but to make the ſource of it admired, and not to pry into his abſtruſe Eſſence with it. And though I might ſay

much more concerning God's Perfections, I must henceforth think silence the propereſt Language I can now employ; for 'tis silence that beſt expreſſes our Wonder: And ſure, Wonder is never more ſeaſonable than when God is the Object; A proſtrate Veneration being the ſafeſt apprehehesion of him that is incomprehenſible.

Sect. 13. Having thus conſidered, *Lindamor*, how fit an Object God is of our higheſt Love; for what he is in himſelf; let us now proceed to derive further proofs of the ſame Truth, from what he is to us, (that your Gratitude may contend with your Reaſon, which ſhall moſt heighten your Devotion) and we ſhall find in the Vaſtneſs, Freeneſs, Diſ-intereſtneſs, Conſtancy, and Advantageouſneſs of his Love to us, that more than all the Love we can pay him, were but a little part of what we owe him.

But for the firſt Attribute, we have aſſign'd his Love, (the Greatneſs of it) it being a general Property, diffuſed through all the reſt, and conſpicuous in them, it requires now to be treated of apart.

We ſhall then proceed to the freeneſs or unmeritedneſs of God's love; To believe

lieve which ſtrangely vaſt, we need but conſider, that we ſo little could at firſt deſerve his Love, that he lov'd us even before we had a Being: and our Felicity in his degrees, preceded our exiſtence in this World. God lov'd you numerous ages before you were; and his Goodneſs is ſo entirely its own Motive, that even your Creation (ſince when alone you can pretend to merit his love) is the effect of it. This benefit alone were ſufficient to render God the Object of our Love, though we were that of his Averſion. For (as the Perſians ador'd the Sun even when it ſcorch'd them) we eſteem our ſelves obliged to love and honour our Parents in ſpight of their being wicked and unkind, though they be but God's inſtruments in our Production, and made us what we were born, not arbitrarily, but in virtue of his Ordination. But God to confer on us, in the moſt excellent and endearing manner, the Bleſſing promis'd to his Antient People, when he vouchſafed to aſſure them, that *he would love them freely*, was pleaſed to love us, not onely when we were not at all, but when we were his Enemies, *If when we were Enemies* (ſaith St. *Paul*) *we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son*, &c. Our Inexiſtence indeed

Hoſ. 14. 4.

Rom. 5. 10

indeeed was a condition, wherein nothing in us was capable of being a Motive of God's Love: but our enmity proceeded further, and made us worthy of his Deteſtation; as if his Love were nothing unleſs it vanquiſh'd Obſtacles, as well as wanted Motives. This gave the Apoſtle a juſt cauſe to ſay, that *God Commend-*
Rom. 5. 8. *eth his love towards us, in that while we were yet ſinners Chriſt died for us*: That is, when we wanted all Motives to invite his Love, unleſs our very want of them ſhould paſs for one. And how did God expreſs his Love unto us? even by the gift of the Son of his Love; *For God ſo loved the world,*
Joh. 3. 16. (ſays the Divine Token of his Love) *that he gave his only begotten Son.* And how did
Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8. that Son Love it? *He* (ſays the Apoſtle) *being in the form of God, thought it no Robbery to be equal with God; but made himſelf of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a ſervant, and was made in the likeneſs of men. And being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Croſs.* That is, That he would love at no leſs Rate than death; and from the ſuper-eminent heighth of Glory, ſtoop'd and abas'd himſelf to the ſufferance of the extreameſt of Indignities, and ſunk himſelf to the bottom

tom of Abjectedneſs, to exalt our condition to the contrary Extreme. *He was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities, the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and with his ſtripes we are healed,* ſays the Prophet. *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that though he was rich, yet for our ſakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich,* ſays the Apoſtle. Men having diſpleaſed God, & conſequently forfeited all Right and Natural Poſſibility to Happineſs; even whil'ſt they compleated the Forlorneſs of their condition, by the Lethargy of not being ſenſible of it, and were as careleſs to Seek means of Recovery, as they had been unable to Deviſe them of themſelves: Even then, his reſtleſs Love would never be at quiet, till it had ſet his Omniſcience on work, to contrive Expedients, and find out a way to reconcile his Juſtice and his Mercy, in reconciling Sinners to Himſelf. And this merciful Deſign, by the Incarnation of of his Son, he proſecuted in a way ſo Worthy of Himſelf, and ſo Advantageous to us, that our juſt wonder at it may keep us from having any, to find that, as St. *Peter* informs us, the very Angels (prompted, queſtionleſs by a Religious Curioſity)

Iſa. 53. 5.

2 Cor. 8. 9.

1 Pet. 1.12 Mat. 23.7. Joh. 10.30

ardently *desire to look into* those Divine Mysteries. I find it hotly disputed amongst Divines, (not only betwixt the Socinians and the Orthodox, but betwixt Orthodox and Orthodox) whether or no God could, without violating his Justice, have devised any other Course for the Expiation of Sin, than the Passion and Death of Christ. But, without venturing to Determine, whether or no God Could, to Redeem us, have chosen any other way; We may safely think, that he has chosen the most obliging and most Endearing way; displaying in this Divine Manner of Rescuing us, the severest Justice, and the highest Mercy; the greatest Hatred of Sin, and the greatest Love to Sinners: Since by those uneqnall'd and unvaluable Sufferings, to which he delivered up for us that Son, who is so near unto him, that he truly said, *I and the Father are one*, He at once manifested both how much he hated Sin, which he so heavily punish'd in the Person he most Lov'd; (though that Surety but adopted it, to free Men from the Insupportable vengeance of it) and how much he Lov'd Sinners, by giving up what he so Lov'd for a Ransom of those that were guilty of what he so Hated. And therefore our Saviour,

viour, though he did ſuch great things to ſatisfie the unbelieving and contumacious Jews of his being their promis'd *Meſſiah*, would not Decline Death to convince them; And, though he had not ſeldom done ſo much to make himſelf the Object of their Faith, would not be invited from the Croſs, though the chief Prieſts and Scribes themſelves ſaid at his Crucifixion, *Let him now come down from the Croſs, and we will believe on him.* Mat. 23. 7. And Chriſt, to convince the World of their unableneſs to emerge and recover out of that deep Abyſs, wherein the Load of Sin (which in Scripture is called *a weight*) had Precipitated fall'n Man, came not into the World until well nigh 4000 years of Sickneſs had made the Diſeaſe deſperate, and the cure almoſt Hopeleſs. So inveterate an obſtinacy at once widening the Diſtance betwixt God and Man, and proclaiming the latters Diſability to find by his own Wiſdom, Expedients of Re-union. Heb. 12. 1. Thus Chriſt heal'd and diſpoſſeſs'd a Dumb perſon, who was able to make entreaties but by the Diſability of pronouncing them; and might truely ſay to the ſecure World, *I am found of them that ſought me not.* Mat. 9. 32. Iſa. 65. 1. And when our Saviour was come into the wretched World, of all

all the numerous Miracles recorded in the Gospel, he scarce did any for his own private Relief. And to shew, that as he endured his Sorrows for our sakes, that by
Isa. 53, 5. *his stripes* we might *be healed*; so were the Joys he tasted in Relation to us. We read not (which is highly observable) in the whole Gospel, that ever he rejoyc'd but once, and that was, when his return'd Disciples inform'd him, that they had Victo-
Luk. 10. riously *chas'd Devils* and *Diseases* out of *oppressed Mortals*, and that by his *Authority* men had been dispossess'd of both the Tempter and Punishment of Sin. He convers'd among his Contemporaries with Virtues, as well attesting what he was, as Prophecies or Miracles could do; and, to teach Man, how much he valu'd Him above those Creatures that Man makes his Idols, he often altred and suspended the Course of Nature for Man's instruction, or his Relief, and revers'd the Laws establish'd in the Universe, to engage Men
Mat. 12. 24 to obey those of God, by doing Miracles so numerous and great, that the Jews Unbelief may be almost counted One. Yet
Mat. 3. 12. were those wonders wrought for a Generation that ascrib'd them to the Devil, and return'd them with so unexemplifi'd an Ingratitude, that 'tis not the least of his wonders

wonders, that he would vouchsafe to work any of them for such blasphemous wretches: who were indeed, as some of the later Jews have too truely styl'd themselves, in relation to their fathers, *Chometz ben ya-yin*, Vineger the Child of Wine, a most degenerate off-spring of holy Progenitors. He suffer'd so much for them, that made him do so, that he suffer'd the addition of Misery of being thought to suffer differvedly; *And he was numbred with the Transgressors.* And though he liv'd as much a Miracle as any he did, yet did his condition sometimes appear so despicable and forlorn, that men could not know his Deity but by his Goodness, which was ~~so~~ infinite not to belong Incommunicably to God. And though 'twere once a Saying of our *Saviours*, *Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends*; yet is it not what is said of the love here mention'd, to be understood of Love indefinitely, or generally considered, but only of the single acts or exepressions of a man's love to his friends compar'd betwixt themselves. and so the alledg'd passage seems to mean but this, That among the single Acts of kindness to a man's friends, there is not any one more highly expressive of a real and

Isa. 53. 12.

Joh. 15. 13.

and ſincere Love, than to part with ones life for their ſakes. This Text therefore would not be indefinitely apply'd to the affection of Love it ſelf, as if it could not poſſibly be greater than is requiſite to make a man content or willing to die for his friends; for he that ſacrifices beſides his Life, his Fortune alſo, his Children, and his Reputation, does thereby expreſs more Love to them, than he could do by parting with his Life only for them. And he that is forward to die for thoſe that hate him, or, at leaſt, know him not, diſcloſes a more plentiful and exuberant ſtock of Love, than he that does the ſame kindneſs but for thoſe that Love him. And thus our Saviour would be underſtood, unleſs we would ſay, that he Out-practis'd what he taught; for he came to lay down his life, even for his enemies, and (like the kind Balſam-Tree, whoſe healing-wounds weep Sovereign Balm to cure thoſe that made them) he refus'd not to die for thoſe that kill'd him, and ſhed his Blood for ſome of thoſe that ſpilt it. And ſo little was his injur'd Love to the ungrateful World diſcourag'd or impair'd by the ſavage entertainment he met with in it, that, after he had ſuffer'd from wretched men (for whoſe ſakes he left heaven

ven to become capable of ſuffering) ſuch barbarous indignities, as might have made bare puniſhments appear Mercy, and even cruelty it ſelf ſeem no more than Juſtice; when I ſay to hope for ſo much as his pardon were preſumption, he was pleas'd to create Confidence of no leſs than his Love, a Virtue. Nor think it, *Lindamor*, impertinent to our preſent Theme, that I inſiſt ſo much on what Chriſt has done and ſuffer'd for us, ſince both he himſelf informs us, that *He and his Father are one.* And ſome of the Texts already mention'd have taught us, that it was an effect of God's love alſo to the world, that *He gave his only begotten Son to redeem us*; and, That *Godc ommendeth his Love towards us in that while we were yet ſinners Chriſt died for us.* Wherefore I ſhall without ſcruple proceed to obſerve to you, that ſo free is Chriſt's dilection, that the grand condition of our Felicity is our Belief, that he is diſpoſed to make us happy; on terms not only ſo honourable to him, but ſo advantageous to us, that, I was about to ſay, that poſſibly Faith it ſelf would ſcarce be exacted as requiſite to our happineſs, but that the condition does encreaſe the benefit, by vouchſafing us bold and early anticipations of it: For,

Joh. 10. 30. *See alſo* v. Joh. 8. 4, 9, 10, 11. Joh. 3, 16 Rom. 5. 8

Faith,

Heb.11.1. *Faith* being (as the Apoſtle terms it) *the ſubſtance of things hoped for, and evidence* (or conviction) *of thigns not ſeen*, wafts our joys to this ſide of the Grave, bows Heaven down to us, till our freed Spirits can ſoar up to Heaven; and does us ſuch a ſervice, as the Jewiſh Spies did to their Country-men, by bringing them over to this ſide *Jordan* into the Wilderneſs, ſome of the pleaſant and delicious Fruits of the bleſt Land of Promiſe. I ſaid, *Lindamor*, that Faith was the grand Condition required in God's free grant of Eternal Life. Not that I would aſcribe any thing to a Lazy, Speculative, and Barren Faith, in oppoſition to that lively and active one, which is called by the Apoſtle, πίστις δι ἀγάπης ἐνεργεμένη, *Faith operating by Love*; ſince I am informed by St. *James*, that the Divorce of Faith and Works is as deſtructive to Religion, as that of Soul and Body is to Life: But that I was willing to mind you, that though true Faith (which cries like *Rachel*, *Give me Children or elſe I die*) be ever the pregnant Mother of good Works, yet are not thoſe Works the cauſe, but the Effects and Signs of God's firſt Love to Men, (however afterward the Children may Nurſe their Parents.) As, though the Needle's pointing

Numb.13. 23.27.

Gal.5.2.6.

Jam.2.6.

Gen.30.

ing at the Poles be, by being an Effect, an Argument of its having been Invigorated by the Loadſtone, or received Influence from ſome other Magnetick Body; yet is not that Reſpect unto the North the Cauſe, but the Operation of the Iron's being drawn by the attractive Mineral. *Thou art good, and doſt good,* ſays the Pſalmiſt to his Maker. The greatneſs of his goodneſs is that which makes it ours; nor doth He do us good, becauſe that we are good, but becauſe He is liberally ſo; as the Sun ſhines on Dunghils, not out of any Invitation his Beams find there, but becauſe it is his Nature to be diffuſive of his Light. Yet with this difference, that whereas the Sun's Bounty by being rather an Advantage to us than a Favour, deſerves our Joy, and not our Thanks, becauſe his Viſits are made deſignleſly, and without any particular intention of addreſs (by ſuch a bare Neceſſity of Nature, as that which makes Springs flow out into Streams, when their Beds are too narrow to contain the renewed water that doth inceſſantly ſwell the exuberant Sources;) God on the contrary, for being neceſſarily kind, is not leſs freely or Obligingly ſo, to You or Me; for, though ſome kind of Communicativeneſs be Eſſential Pſal. 119. 68.

Essential to his Goodness, yet his Extension of it without himself, and his Vouchsafing it to this or that particular Person, are purely Arbitrary. To omit his Love to the numberless Elect Angels; the strict Relations betwixt the Persons of the Blessed Trinity, supplying God with Internal Objects, which imploy'd his Kindness before the Creation, and Himself being able to allow his Goodness the Extent of Infinity for its Diffusion. But (having glanc'd at this only by the by) we may yet further admiringly observe, That whereas Men usually give freeliest where they have not given before, and make it both the Motive and the Excuse of their desistance from giving any more, That they have given already. Gods bounty hath a very different Method; for he uses to give, because he hath given, and that he may give. Consonantly to which, when the revolting *Israelites* had broken the Contents, whilst *Moses* was bringing them the Tables of the LAW, and had thereby provok'd the Incensed Giver of it to the thoughts of a sudden Extirpation of so Ingrateful and Rebellious a People; we may observe, That, whereas God, as unwilling to remember his former Goodness to them, speaking to *Moses*, calls them,

them, *Thy people which thou broughteſt out of the Land of Ægypt: Moſes*, on the other ſide, to engage God to the New mercy of a Pardon, repreſents to God his Former mercy to them, & calls them *God's people*, which *He brought forth out of the Land of Ægypt, with great power, and with a mighty hand.* And ſo conſpicuous in the Eternal Son was this property of the Merciful Father, that when ſick *Lazarus*'s Siſters implored his Reſcue for their exſpiring Brother, the Motive they employ, and which Poſper'd their addreſſes, was, *Lord, behold*, (not, he who loveth thee, but) *he whom thou loveſt, is ſick.* And as he takes the firſt inducements of his Bounty from Himſelf; ſo do his former Favors both invite and give Rates to his ſucceeding Bleſſings. And there is reaſon for it: For his pure Love being all the Merit, by which Man can pretend to the Effects of his Bounty; it is but juſt, that the Degree of his Love ſhould Proportion thoſe Favours, which 'tis our onely Title to; and that God's Liberality ſhould as well afford Meaſures as Motives to it ſelf.

Exod. 32. 7. verſ. 11. Joh. 11. 3.

Nor is God's love leſs Diſ-intereſs'd than Free. His grand Deſign upon us is but to make us Inſtruments and Partakers of His Glory, and to bring us to everlaſt-

Sect. 14.

ing Happineſs, by a Way that does as well elevate and dignifie our Nature, as the Condition reſerv'd for us will. His Method of ſaving us if but comply'd with, does here, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Fit us for the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*; We being made (as St. *Peter* ſpeaks) *Partakers of the Divine Nature, having eſcap'd the corruption that is in the world through Luſt.* So that thoſe things, wherein the nobleſt of the Philoſophers plac'd their Felicity, ſerve but to Qualifie and Prepare Chriſtians for that Higher Bleſſedneſs that is reſerv'd by God for thoſe that love him; and cannot but be heightn'd and endear'd by the Value, which Graces and Virtues had given men on Earth, for ſuch a Noble and Rational kind of Happineſs, as is apportion'd to them in Heaven. What ends can he have upon us, whoſe Goodneſs and his Bleſſedneſs are both Infinite? He was unconceivably Happy (in his own Self-ſufficiency) before the Creatures had a Being; and ſure that Felicity that needed not Themſelves to be ſupreme, needs nothing that they can do. Nor was it his Indigence that forc'd him to make the World, thereby to make new Acqui-

Col. 1. 12.

2 Pet. 1. 4.

-----Quid enim immortalibus atque beatis, Gratia noſtra queat largirier Emolumenti, ut noſtrâ quidquam cauſâ gerere aggrederentur? Lucret. ex Epic.

Acquiſitions, but his goodneſs that preſs'd him to manifeſt, and to impart his Glory; and the Goods which he ſo overflowingly abounds with. Witneſs his ſuſpenſion of the World's Creation, which certainly had had an earlier Date, were the Deity capable of want, and the Creatures of ſupplying it. *St Paul* in his Epiſtle to *Timothy*, ſtiles God Μακάριος, which we tranſlate, *The bleſſed God*, but may perhaps more properly be rendred, *the happy God:* and elſewhere in the ſame Epiſtle he truely calls him *The Happy*, as well as *Only Potentate*. *God* (ſayes the Apoſtle) *that made the world, and all things therein, ſeeing that He is Lord of Heaven and Earth, dwelleth not*, &c. *As though He needed any thing, ſeeing that he giveth to all Life, and Breath, and all things.* And, *in Him, we live, and move, and have our Being.* And indeed ſo coherent in the mind of a mere Man, that does but conſider and underſtand the Import of his own Notions, is the belief of God's Happineſs to that of His Being; that I remember the Epicurean *Lucretius* himſelf, even in that impious paſſage, where he denies Divine Providence; and in a ſeeming, but injurious Compliment, would, under the pretence of eaſing God of it, deprive Him

1 Tim 1. 11.

1 Tim. 6. 15.

Act. 17. 24, 25, 26.

of the government of the World; does yet confeſs, that the Divine Nature muſt neceſſarily enjoy a Supreme and endleſs Tranquility adding, (to bring this to our preſent purpoſe) that 'tis

——*Privata dolore omni, privata periclis;*
Ipſa ſuis pollens opibus, nihil indiga noſtri.

Whereby he acknowledges,

That from all griefs and dangers of them free'd,
Rich in it ſelf, it has of us no need.

Or, if you will have him ſpeak of the gods in the Plural, like a Heathen Poet, that

Far above griefs and dangers, thoſe bleſt powers,
Rich in their Native Goods, need none of ours.

A much Nobler Poet tells us, That *the Earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof, the World, and they that dwell therein.* Pſal. 24. 1. Agreeably whereunto, that *Great God that formed all things*, (as in our Tranſlation the Scripture calls him) Prov. 26. 10. ſays in one of the Pſalms,

Pſalms, *If I were hungry, I would not tell thee for the world is mine, and the fulneſs thereof.* Pſal. 50. 12
His Ubiquity excludes all wiſhes of Remove, by making his Eſſence uncapable of excluſion; for, Whither ſhould he deſire to tranſport himſelf that is every where, and can wiſh himſelf in no place where he is not already? his ſufficiency is ſuch, that he can ſee no Goods, but what he gives or hath, (or rather both beſtows and poſſeſſes) his plenty being ſo unexhauſted a Spring of Goods that his Liberality does leſs impoveriſh God, than the Sun's light does him; or imparted knowledge impairs the Teacher's Stock. And therefore, though *St James* doth very juſtly call God, *The Father of Lights*, who is the beſtower of every good and every perfect Gift; yet the *Friend of God*, (as the Scripture calls *Abraham*) and that Royal Prieſt, (whom the Writer to the Hebrews teaches us to have been ſo illuſtrious a Type of Him, whom he calls, *The high Prieſt of our Profeſſion*) do both of them in the ſame Chapter ſtile him, *The Poſſeſſor of Heaven and Earth.* No, no, God needs not beg From, nor covet In the Creatures ſhallow ſtreams, thoſe goods, of which he not only hath, but is the ſource. Our greateſt ſervices to our Creator muſt be

Jam. 1. 17.
Jam. 2. 23.
Heb. 7. *per totum.*
Heb. 3. 1.
Gen. 14. 18. 22.

to discharge our selves, not to advantage him, nor as thinking to add any thing to a Felicity which were not infinite, could it admit encrease. Our highest Performances, though they be dues, amount not unto Tributes, but are rather like those Pepper-corns of Rent which Free-holders pay, not with hope or with intent to enrich their Land-lord, but to acknowledge, that they hold all from him. When we admire the Sun, our seeing of his Light doth not increase it, it makes it not greater, but only it makes it ours; and when we turn away, or shut our Eyes, that glorious Planet suffers no Eclipse, and is not at all darkned or impair'd, nor doth He thereby lose his light, but We: The easiness of the application requires, and excuses its omission, *If thou sinnest*, (says *Elihu* in *Job*) *what dost thou against him? if thou be righteous, what givest thou him? or what receiveth he of thine hand: Thy wickedness may hurt a Man as thou art, and thy righteousness may profit the Son of Man.* In effect, the wicked's spite against God is but like a mad mans running his head against the wall that leaves the wall unshaken, but dashes his own Brains out. God *inhabits* a Felicity (as well as *Light*) *inaccessible* to all inferior attempts: his Soveraign Tranquillity

Job. 35. 6, 7, 8.

1. Tim. 6. 16.

quillity is ſo ſublimely plac'd, that 'tis above the reach of all Diſquieting Impreſſions; and, like the Stars, that feel not the Diſeaſes their inauſpicious Influence produces, He doth not reſent the torments he Inflicts. Gods Juſtice is not leſs Eſſential to him than his Mercy; Witneſs that (the numbers of the Saints and the Reprobate conſider'd) thouſands fall Sacrifices to the ſeverer Attribute, for one that proves Capable of the milder. He ſaid, *He would get himſelf honour upon Pharaoh and all his Hoſt*, when he deſign'd their ruine in the *Red ſea*: And *Moſes* ſaid, *He hath triumphed gloriouſly* in effecting it. And in *Ezekiel* he ſays, *Behold, I am againſt thee, O* Sidon, *and I will be glorifi'd in the midſt of thee, and they ſhall know that I am the Lord, when I ſhall have executed my judgments in her, and ſhall be ſanctifi'd in her.* Thus, when a flaſh of God's indignation (kindled by that *ſtrange fire* they preſum'd to offer before him) had blaſted the two preſumptuous Sons of *Aaron*, God is ſaid *to have been ſanctifi'd in them that come nigh him, and to have been glorifi'd before all the people*; ſuch eminent and exemplary Inſtances of Severity, manifeſting him to be ſo Holy in his Laws, and ſo Concern'd for them, that even the

Exod. 14. 17. 18. Exod. 15. 1. Ezek. 28. 22. Levit. 10. 3.

Miniſters of his Altars ſhall not violate them with Impunity, but find Him (what the Writer to the *Hebrews* calls him) *A conſuming fire*; Who will be Glorifi'd before all his people, either by the Obedience of thoſe that approach Him, or by their Deſtruction. So to Evidence, that God can derive Satisfaction as well from the Exerciſe of provoked Juſtice, as from that of his provoked Mercy; the ſacred Orator uſes this remarkable *Antanaclaſis*: *And it ſhall come to paſs, that as the Lord rejoyced over you to do you good, and multiply you; ſo will the Lord rejoyce over you to deſtroy you, and bring you to naught.* Thus, though it be truly ſaid of God by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, that *he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the Children of Men*: (and therefore the determined Conſumption of the whole Land, which our Bibles Engliſh, *God's work*, *his ſtrange work*, other Tranſlators read, *Opus alienum ſuum*) Yet when the ſins of incorrigible offenders are grown to that provoking Heighth, that his Mercy intercedes no more to avert or ſuſpend the inflictions of his Juſtice; than how much he can ſatisfie himſelf in Deſtroying thoſe that would not be Preſerved, may be gheſs'd at by that formidable Expreſſion in *Ezekiel*; where, having fore-told what havock

Heb. 12. 29.

Deut. 18. 63.

Lam. 3. 23.

Iſa. 28. 21.

havock the Sword, the Famine, and the Peſtilence ſhould make amongſt the intractable and diſpers'd *Iſraelites*, he adds, (as a kind of Ἐπιφώνημα) *Thus ſhall mine anger be accompliſhed, and I will cauſe my fury to reſt upon them, and I will be comforted.* The Howlings of the Damned as well ſound forth his Praiſes, as do the Hallelujahs of the Saints; they both do ſing to him an everlaſting Canticle of praiſe; onely in this great Conſort of his whole intelligent Creation, the deſignleſly conſpiring Voices are as differing as the Conditions of the reſpective Singers. Hell's darkneſs doth as well contribute to God's Glory, as Heaven's Eternal Splendor: As Shadows, judiciouſly plac'd, do no leſs praiſe the Painter, than do the livelier and brighter Colours. And as when the Earth doth ſend black, noiſome, and ſulphureous Exhalations up toward the Sky, alas, they reach not Heaven, nor diſcompoſe the Spheres; but all the Storms and Thunders they produce fall on that Globe they came from, and there do all their miſchief: So, the wicked may wrong God indeed, yet do they really Harm but themſelves by all their greateſt ſins, which trouble Him chiefly, but becauſe they neceſſitate him to puniſh them: for the tranſgreſſions that do Ezek. 13. 5.

moſt

moſt Provoke God do him not the leaſt Harm. An impious perſon may (as *Elihu* lately inform'd us) hurt a Man as himſelf is, not that ſupremely bleſſed Deity; the Reſult of whoſe Infinite Perfections is a reſembling Happineſs, which is as inſeparable from Him as his Eſſence. Our offences may derogate from his Acceſſional Glory, not from his Eſſential Felicity; or rather, the moſt deſperate Sinners by their greateſt Crimes, can but Change the Attribute they ſhould bring honour to, and but oppoſe the glorifying of his Goodneſs to occaſion the glorifying of his Juſtice; ſince he will be infallibly glorifi'd, ſoon or late, either by Men's actions, or their ſufferings; by their Practice of Duties, or Puniſhment for Sin. Thus you ſee how little God is beholden to you for your Declining Hell: Nor will the ſcore be very much encreas'd by your Addreſſes & Attempts for Heaven. *Can a man* (ſays *Eliphaz*) *be profitable unto God, as he that is wiſe may be profitable unto himſelf? Is it any pleaſure to the Almighty that thou art righteous? or is it gain unto him that thou makeſt thy ways perfect?* Congruouſly to which ſence the Pſalmiſt ſays, *My Goodneſs extendeth not to Thee*; The fire that we kindle on God's Altars heats and enlightens us, but warms not

Job. 22. 2, 3.

Pſal. 16. 2.

not Heaven at ſo diſtant a remove, nor is wanted in the Sun's reſidence. We have all the Redolence of the Perfumes and incenſe we burn upon his Altars, the Smoak doth vaniſh e'r it can reach the Sky, and whilſt 'tis undiſpers'd, but Clouds, and but Obſcures it. Alas, our beſt performances are as uſeleſs ſervices to God, as the Heir's bringing Wax to his departing Father, is to him, which adds not any thing to the rich man's ſtore, and is by him deſir'd and accepted, only to ſeal away a Fortune to his Son. Though therefore it be true, that God is pleas'd with our performances, yet is that welcome he vouchſafes to give them, ſo far from enabling us by them to requite his Love, that it encreaſes the unrequitedneſs of it; ſince he is delighted with them as they afford him juſt riſes to reward them. How far from Mercenary is then God's Bounty! ſince he accepts our acknowledgements of his former bleſſings, (chiefly) to make them opportunities of conferring freſh ones; as good old *Iſaac* deſir'd his Son's Veniſon, that from the reliſhing of that ſavory Meat he might take an opportunity to bleſs him. Gen. 27. 4.

And the better to diſcover how diſintereſs'd God's favours are, let us further conſider, how little they are requitable; for

for we can give him nothing but his own, (nor, Heaven knows, all that neither;) and both the Will and Power to ſerve him are His, upon ſo juſt and many ſcores, that we are unable to Retribute, unleſs we do reſtore; and all the Duties we can pay our Maker, are leſs properly Requitals than Reſtitutions. When *David* and his Officers had offer'd towards the ſtructure of that Magnificent Temple, which they ſeem'd ambitious to make a Manſion inferior to Heaven only; the King himſelf gave three thouſand Talents of Gold, and ſeven of refin'd ſilver; and the heads of the People, five thouſand Talents (beſides ten thouſand Drachms) of Gold, ten thouſand Talents of ſilver, eighteen thouſand of Braſs, and an hundred thouſand of Iron, (a Treaſure, of which I ſcarce remember to have read the like in any Hiſtory) beſides a number of all manner of precious ſtones, capable of impoveriſhing the very *Indies*: they perfum'd this noble and unequal'd offering with a ſolemn confeſſion, which perhaps in God's eſteem was much more precious than it: *Thine O Lord,* (ſays the Royal Prophet in the name of all) *is the greatneſs, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majeſty; for all that is in heaven and in earth is thine,*

1 Chron. 29.11.16.

thine. Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of thee, and thou reigneſt over all. And in thine hand is power and might, and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give ſtrength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praiſe thy glorious Name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we ſhould be able to offer ſo willingly after this ſort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. For we are ſtrangers before thee, and ſojourners, as were all our Fathers. Our days on Earth are as a ſhadow, and there is none abiding: O Lord our God, all this ſtore that we have prepared to build thee an Houſe for thy Holy Name, cometh of thine hand, and is all thine own. Who, (ſays the Apoſtle, in a queſtion that imports its own Negative) *hath firſt given to him, and it ſhall be recompenſed to him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things.* Nay, even our Love it ſelf (that poor man's Surety and Exchequer, that doth pay all his debts by ſupplying him with the prerogative to Coin his deſires and wiſhes of an arbitrary value) is here unable to diſcharge our debts: our Love being too much the effect, to be capable of being the recompence of Gods. And ſurely, the Divine

Rom. 11. 35. 36.

Amoriſt

1 Joh 4. 10. Amoriſts had cauſe to ſay, that *herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us.* And, as the ſame Apoſtle elſewhere ſpeaks, *we love him, becauſe he firſt loved us.* 1 Joh. 4. 19. If, in effect, we look upon the unworthy conteſt, betwixt God's Mercies, and moſt Mens Ingratitude, and but reflect upon the ſmall return of Love that the greateſt diſburſements of His do uſually bring home; we cannot but acknowledge, (as *David* in the lately mention'd Scripture did) that our loving God for his Favours, is one of the greaeſt Favors that we love him for. So unrequitable is God's Love, and ſo inſolvent are we, that that Love vaſtly improves the benefit, by which alone we might have pretended to ſome ability of Retribution. And ſo unlimited is this impotence of ours to recompence or repay God's dilection, that it extends to, and fetters our very wiſhes. For God enjoys an affluence of Felicity, ſo perfect and entire, that even our wiſhes can aim at nothing for him worthy of him, unleſs inſtructed by what he already actually poſſeſſes, And the ſenſe of this ſame very Impotence, to ſome of the greateſt proficients in *Seraphick Love*, appears not the leaſt uneaſie property of it. It grieves us ſenſibly, to ſee our ſelves reduc'd to be only

only Paſſive, and the Receivers in this Commerce. We would fain contribute ſomething, and cannot always refrain from devoting our Wiſhes to encreaſe his Happineſs, to whom we owe all ours. And ſome holy Perſons (particularly St. *Auſtin*) have, by the Exuberance of their Gratitude and Devotion, been tranſported to make Wiſhes, and uſe Expreſſions, wherein their Affections had a greater ſhare than their Reaſon, and which argued them much better to apprehend, How much God deſerv'd of them, than How little he needed them. But, upon ſecond Thoughts, we ſhall find, that the Cauſe of our Grief ought to turn it into our Joy, ſince the Deſires we would frame, aiming at God's being infinitely happy, are all Fulfilled before they are conceived, and that in the moſt Advantageous and Nobleſt way: For, could God's happineſs admit Acceſſion by our accompliſh'd Wiſhſhes, there were then a poſſibility of his Wanting ſomething to render it Compleat. And ſure, 'tis a more Supreme felicity to be by Nature tranſcendently above All encreaſe of Bleſſedneſs, than to receive the Greateſt that Men can Wiſh.

To proceed now to the Conſtancy of God's Love: we cannot entertain of God *Sect. 16.*

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any Apprehenſions, not altogether Unworthy of him, and criminally Injurious to him, without believing, That to think that he Can be inconſtant, is as great a Crime as 'twere a Miſery to find him ſo. His Love is like his Eſſence, immutably Eternal, reaching from Everlaſting to Everlaſting, it preceded the Nativity of Time, and will ſurvive its utmoſt Period, and Obſequies. *Having loved his own*
Joh. 13.1. *which were in the world, he loved them unto the end*, ſays the Evangeliſt: And when
Jam. 1.17. St. *James* had told us, That *every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, & cometh down from the Father of Lights*, he adds, (to complete our Conſolation) *with whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning. Of his own Will begat he us of the word of truth.* And, in effect, ſince God takes the Motives of his Love to Us, from Himſelf, not from Us, the Unchangeableneſs of his Nature ſeems ſtrongly to infer that of his Charity, aud our Happineſs in it. For *I*
Mal.3,6. *am the Lord, I change not; therefore ye Sons of Jacob are not conſumed*, ſays God by the laſt of his Prophets: And in *Jeremiah* he tells his people, *I have lov'd thee with an everlaſting love.* And what God once ſaid
Joſh.1.5. to the generous *Joſuah*, *I will never leave thee nor forſake thee*, is by the Writer to the

the *Hebrews* apply'd to Believers in general: for *the gifts and calling of God* (ſays the ſame Author elſewhere) *are without repentance.* Nor do thoſe Croſſes that ſeem due to his Anger deſtroy the Immutability of his Love, ſince even that Anger is an Effect of it, proceeding from a Fatherly Impatience of ſeeing a Spot unwip'd off in the Face he loves too well to ſee a Blemiſh in it; and from his Deſire to ſee his Child an Object fit for a larger Meaſure of his kindneſs: As when we beat the Duſt out of a Suit we fancy, we ſtrike not out of Anger, but onely to remove that which doth Sully it, and hinder us to take that Delight in it, which our fondneſs would be pleaſed with a juſt Cauſe to find. *As many as I love, I rebuke and chaſten,* (ſayes our Saviour.) And, *I know O Lord,* (ſays the Pſalmiſt) *that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me.* The Furnace of Affliction being meant but to Refine us from our Earthly droſſineſs, and Soften us for the Impreſſion of God's own Stamp and Image. The great and merciful Architect of his Church, (whom not only the Philoſophers have ſtyl'd, but the Scripture it ſelf calls τεχνίτης, an Artiſt or Artificer) employs not on us the Hammer and the

Heb. 13. 5. Rom. 11. 29.

Rev. 3. 10. Pſal. 119. 75.

Heb. 11. 10.

Chizel; with an intent to Wound or Mangle us, but only to Square and Faſhion our hard and ſtubborn Hearts into ſuch
1 Pet. 2. 5. *living Stones*, as may both Grace and Strengthen his heavenly Structure. Nor is God only thus Conſtant to his Love, but to his Lovelineſs. Our Female Beauties are uſually as fickle in their Faces as their Minds, and more certainly in the Former; becauſe, though Caſualties ſhould ſpare them, Age brings in a Neceſſity of a Change, nay, a Decay; leaving our Doters upon Red and White inceſſantly perplex'd, by the incertainty both of the Continuance of their Miſtreſs's Kindneſs, and of the Laſting of her Beauty, (both which are neceſſary to the *Amoriſt's* Joys and Quiet): for, ſometimes, when the Miſtreſs's humour doth not change ſo Much, as to prove guilty of the fault of Inconſtancy, her Face alters Enough to make her Lovers wiſh Inconſtancy no Fault; or, that ſhe had committed it, that her Fickleneſs might afford them the Excuſe of Imitation or Revenge: But, in Devotion, we are equally ſecure from both theſe Dangers; Since God doth not deſiſt from bleſſing us with His Love, nor ceaſes ever from deſerving the Heighth of Ours. Nor is he only conſtant in making us the Objects

jects of his Love, but alſo in bending and enclining us to make him the object of our ſtrongeſt affections; ſo that he not only perſiſts in continuing to us both the offer and the value of his Love, but perſeveres to give us a receptive diſpoſition to welcome it to us, and reflect it up to Him. The want of ſuch a diſpoſition loſt *Adam* Paradiſe, and the fall'n Angels Heaven; there being to the object, that muſt ſecure our Love, ſuch a Nature requiſite in reference to our affections, as Philoſophers are pleas'd to aſcribe to the world's Centre in relation to heavy bodies; which, they teach us, that Magnetick Point has the double Faculty, not only to draw thither, but to keep there. For ſo Untoward and Croſs-grain'd are We, in point of our own Good, and ſo unfit to procure, and ready to deſert, our own Felicity, that neither its Excellency is a ſufficient Motive to carry our addreſſes to it, nor its poſſeſſion a competent tye to intercept in us all deſigns of Revolts and Divorces: but we muſt be uſed as peeviſh Children are, who, (on the one ſide) when their Mouths are out of taſte, and they refuſe to take what is neceſſary for them, muſt have it not only offer'd them, but forc'd upon them, and be (as it were)

made to receive it; and who (on the other ſide) muſt be reſtrain'd from Gadding, when the Beauty of they Manſions the live in cannot invite their ſtay; but they would gladly leave the proudeſt Palaces Architecture can boaſt, to run into the ſtreet, and dabble in the Kennel. All theſe three properties of Divine Conſtancy are not ill ſhadow'd in the operations of the Load-ſtone, (a Mineral, in which I have made too many Experiments, not to be by you allow'd to make ſome compariſons to it:) For, firſt, it never forſakes its Inclinations for the Steel: next, being united to it, it retains ſo conſtantly its attractive Qualities, that it gives not the Needle any Motive of deſerting it; and Thirdly, it doth never rightly touch the amorous Steel without leaving an Impreſſion, which ever after diſpoſes it to a Converſion to that Magnetick Poſture, which beſt fits it to receive freſh Influences. To which, let me add this other Reſemblance, betwixt God's worke on Us, and the Load-ſtones on the Iron, that the kind Stone attracts a Needle to it, not to advantage it ſelf by that Union, but to impart its virtue to what is draws. Beſides, Abſence and Rivals, thoſe frequent Ruiners of other Lovers happineſs, can threaten

threaten nothing of formidable to yours. For, abſence (which ſo divorces us from that which animates us, that Lovers do not ſo improperly ſtile it Death, if Death be but the Separation of Soul and Body) by God's Ubiquity we are ſecured from; He is ever preſent with us, or rather in us. You that not long ſince ſo highly valu'd the opportunities of converſing with your Miſtriſs for ſome few moments, ſhall here find your priviledges improv'd to a permiſſion, nay, an Invitation, of entertaining the Object of your Love at all times: No hour renders your viſits unſeaſonable, nor no length tedious: He is rather welcomſt to God that comes to him oftener, and ſtays with him longeſt. What favours were vouchſaf'd to that antient Propheteſs, (who was likewiſe one of the firſt Evangeliſts) who for many years *departed not from the Temple, but ſerved God with Faſtings and Prayers night and day*, the beginning of *St Luke's* Goſpel may inform you: The *midnight Hymns* of *Paul* and *Silas* did not only not diſturb or offend him they prais'd, but procur'd the viſit of an Angel to bring them miraculous and unexpected liberty, as a proof of the acceptableneſs of their ſeemingly unſeaſonable Devotions. When

Luk. 2 39, &c.

Act. 6. 25, 26, &c.

Gen. 5. 22, 23, 24. *Enoch had walked with God* as many years as the year has days, God was so far from being importun'd or Tir'd by that lasting assiduity, that vouchsafing him an unexampled exemption from death, he was pleas'd, by a new and a nearer Cut to Heaven, to admit him to a yet closer, more immediate, and more undistracted Communion with himself. And when *Moses* Exod. 34. 30. had spent no less than *forty days, and forty nights* in conversing (if I may use so Familiar a term) with God in the Mount, he brought down thence, instead of a Penance for his importunity, so signal and radiant a Testimony of God's peculiar Favour, that his dazled Countrey-men were as much disabled, as invited, to gaze on an object of so much wonder. And then, how proud do we see many Lovers of their sufferings, when she but knows of them for whom they are endured? But in *Seraphick Love*, there is not the least good wish, or privatest suffering, nay, not a whispering Sigh, or closer Thought, that silently Groans or Aspires in the Amorous Soul, but he both sees and hears, that puts his Servants *tears into his Bottle*, Psal. 56. 8. Sweetning and Recompencing the greatest misfortunes that his Love occasions, with such support and joys, as hinder us to feel them,

them and make them deſerve a contrary name. Each amorous Soul may ſay to God, with *David*, *Thou knoweſt my down-ſitting, and my upriſing, thou underſtandeſt my thoughts afar off, thou compaſſeſt my path, and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my wayes.* And Chriſt alſo himſelf has ſo attentive an Eye upon the amorous Soul, that he is held forth in the *Apocalypſe*, as telling the Ruler of the Church of *Smyrna*, *I know thy works, & tribulation, & poverty*, And ſaying to the Angel of the Church of *Pergamus*, *I know thy works, & where thou dwelleſt, even where Satan's ſeat is, and thou holdeſt faſt my name, and haſt not denied my faith, even in thoſe dayes wherein Antipas was my faithful Martyr, who was ſlain among you, where Satan dwelleth.* So that no endearing Circumſtance of our Love ſcapes unobſerv'd by Him, who has Done and Suffer'd ſo much to engage us to it. God remembers not our Endeavours to ſerve Him, the leſs, for Our having forgotten them. *When ſaw we thee any way diſtreſſed, and relieved thee?* will be the Queſtion of thoſe to whom Heaven it ſelf will be at the laſt Day awarded, as having Miniſtred to their Redeemer. Thoſe, that in Degenerate times, ſuch as ours, *Lindamor*, did, like *Lot* in *Sodom*, mourn for

Pſal. 139. 2, 3.

Rev. 2. 8, 9.

ver. 12, 13

Matth. 25 37. &c.

Their Sins, that mourned not for their Own, and condol'd among themselves the spreading Wickedness of the times they liv'd in; though probably the Dangers threatned them by the very Sinfulness they deplor'd, made them affect such Privacies in their Conferences, as freed them from the Thoughts of being Over-heard; yet the Scripture informs us (and 'tis a Comfortable as well as Memorable Pas-
Mal. 3. 16, 17. sage) that *the Lord hearkned and heard it, and a Book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name, Then shall he return, and discern betwixt the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not. I know*, says
Rev. 2. 9, 10. Christ, (not only to the Angel of *Smyrna*, but to each true Sufferer for him) *thy works, and tribulation, and poverty: Fear none of these things that thou shalt suffer. Be thou faithful unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* God is often pleas'd to accept those good Thoughts and Intentions of his Servants, which never arrive at actual Peformances, Though *David* built not the Temple he design'd, yet his Son, that did it, informs us, that God said unto him,
2 Chron. 6. 8. *For asmuch as it was in thine heart to build an Heuse for my Name, Then didst well in that*

it

it was in thine heart, &c, And 'tis the Epithet our Saviour gives God, *Your Father which seeth in secret, &c.* Nor need we fear our Rivals should Supplant us, since we can have none in Devotion, whose Prayer and Endeavour it is not, that God would love us more. For his Love to You being (as the chiefest Merit) the strongest Motive and Title unto theirs, they cannot but Wish him well whom God doth love so; and cannot Wish him better, than by imploring for him fresh Additions, both of that Love of God, and grateful Dispositions to return it. Our Saviour assures us, that *there is Joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one Sinner that repenteth.* And the sole Hymn (except a Visionary one) I find recorded of the Celestial Quire, was sung for a Blessing to Mankind, wherein (for ought I know) their Love and Sympathy alone concern'd them: *For unto us* (Men) *the Child is born, and unto us the Son is given. Who took not upon him the nature of Angels, but the seed of Abraham.* So Noble and so Disinteress'd doth Divine Love make Ours, that there is nothing, besides the Object of that Love, that we love more than our Concurrents in it, perchance out of a Gratitude to their assisting us, to pay a Debt (of Love and Praise) for

Mat. 6. 6.

Luk. 15. 7, 10.

Luk. 2. 13, 14.

Isa. 9. 6.

Heb. 2. 16.

for which (alas!) we find our ſingle ſelves but too Inſolvent.

Sect. 17. Perhaps I need not mind you, *Lindamor*, that divers Paſſages of the fore-going Diſcourſe, ſuppoſe the Truth of their Doctrine, who aſcribe to God, in relation to every Man, an Eternal, Unchangeable and Inconditionate Decree of Election, or Reprobation. Yet concerning the Controverſies betwixt rhe *Calviniſts* and the *Remonſtrants*, about Prædeſtination, & the coherent Doctrines, it were Improper to give you here my ſence. Thoſe that are truely Pious of either Party, are perhaps otherwiſe look'd on by God than by one another, as Contending, which of God's Attributes ſhould be moſt Reſpected; the one ſeeming to Affirm irreſpective Decrees, to magnifie his Goodneſs; and the other to Deny them but to Secure the credit of his Juſtice. And even in Honouring the ſame Attribute, his Goodneſs, theſe Adverſaries ſeem Rivals, the one party ſuppoſing it beſt Celebrated by believing it ſo irreſiſtible, that to whom ſoever 'tis intended, he Cannot but be happy; and th'other thinking it moſt Extoll'd by being believ'd ſo Univerſal, that it will make Every man happy, if he pleaſes: The one Party electing to Honour Free-grace, by aſſigning

assigning it (as to Men) an unlimitedly vast extent; as the other does, by ascribing it an infallibly victorious degree. But though my haste, and the nature of my Theme make me decline the Controversies about Prædestination; yet since the Doctrine that maintains it, is not only, by almost all the rest of Mankind, but by the rest of the Protestant Churches themselves, (the *Lutherans*, and divers Learn'd Divines of the Church of *England*) not only rejected, but detested as little less than Blasphemous, (as indeed they that judge it an Error, cannot but be tempted to think it a dangerous one, and of very pernicious Consequence, so far forth as its Sequels are permitted to have influence on Men's Practice) I think it not amiss to Advertise you, that the Doctrine of Prædestination is not necessary to justify the Freeness and the Greatness of God's Love. For so conspicuous and refulgent a Truth is that of God's being the Author of Man's Felicity, that the dispute betwixt the *Calvinists* and *Arminians* is not so much concerning the Thing, as concerning the Manner of its being proffer'd; the former affirming Grace to be irresistibly presented; the latter, though they deny it to be irrejectable, yet granting, not only that it is altoge-

altogether free and undeserv'd, but also, that the proffer is made both with a Power enabling those to whom 'tis tender'd, to accept it, and with such engaging invitations, that Man at his first Conversion need contribute nothing to his Felicity, but the not-wilfully refusing it, and may more properly be said to owe it unto God, than the Beggar to owe his Alms to his Reliever, though he open his hand to receive it, which he might have declin'd to do, if he would have wilfully courted his own prejudice. Christ paid *a Ransom to Redeem us*, 'tis true, and he is therefore call'd, 2 Pet. 2. 1. *The Lord that bought us*: but it was God's free goodness, both to provide us That Christ, and to accept of That Ransom, neither of which he was oblig'd to do, and therefore the Scripture ascribes it not to the Justice, but to the Love of God to the world, that *He sent his onely begotten Son* Joh. 3. 16. *to redeem it*: and *St Paul* in the same Text tells us both, that *We are justify'd*, δωρεὰν Rom. 3. 24. τῇ αὐτοῦ χάριτι, *freely by his Grace*, and yet that it is, διὰ τῆς ἀπολυτρώσεως *through the Redemption*, (purchas'd for a Ransom; the Original word English'd Redemption, relating to the price paid for the Redeeming of Captives) *that is in Jesus Christ*. 'Tis confest on all hands, that Merit must be

be disclaim'd, and those that seem to expect something from God as a due, acknowledge, that if his promise did not, their actions could not, make it so; and that 'tis to his Mercy they owe the Right they have to confide in his Justice. St. *Paul*, who having *fought the good Fight, finish'd his course, and kept the Faith*, expected *a Crown of Righteousness from the Lord*, under the Notion of the Righteous *Judge*; yet tells us, *that by Grace we are saved, through faith, and that not of our selves, it is the gift of God.* Whose Promises, now they are made us, allow us indeed to expect Heaven from his Justice; but *the making us those great and precious promises*, (as *St Peter* justly styles them) must be acknowledg'd the pure Effect of *his free and undeserved Goodness*; which to believe Infinite, we need but consider the disproportion betwixt such a Recompence as Eternal Glory, and the least imperfect performances of ours: which though they needed not pardon, could not at least challenge any reward from him, who, as our Creator, has such a Right to exact of us what services he pleases, without proposing us any Recompence, that our exactest obedience to all his Commands, would yet leave us to confess our selves

2 Tim. 4. ver. 7, 8.

Eph. 2. 8.

2 Pet. 1. 4.

unprofitable

Luk 17. 10. *unprofitable servants who have done but what it was our Duty to do*; and what if we had not done, we had given God, who had the Power, the Right and Provocation to punish us. And indeed, so conscious are men generally (if not naturally) to their being beholding to God for their Felicity, that even those that mistake or oppose his way of doing them good, will yet be sure to find out some Notion or other under which they may conceive themselves God's debtors for his Blessings. That the more sober sort of Romish Catholiks themselves, ascribe not so much to Merit, (properly so call'd) nor so little to God's Grace, as the more Quarelsome Writers of their party have given the more eager disputants of ours occasion to reproach them, were perhaps no difficult task to manifest, if my haste would give me leave. That the *Arminians* own the freeness and unmeritedness of God's grace, the Remonstrants * Confession and Apology are very careful to satisfy the World. And even the *Socinians*, (how prosperously I determine not) are not a little, or unindustriously sollicitous to free their erroneous Doctrine of Justification from the objected guilt of its tendency to draw the Imbracers of it to *Sacrifice to their*

* *Especially* Chap. 17. Numb. 5, 6.

their own Nets, and thank themselves for their Felicity. Which brings into my mind a passage that I lately read in one of the chief modern Upholders of that Sect, *Schlichtingius*; who is wont, in my Opinion, where his Subject will bear it, to discourse as Fairly and as Rationally as almost any Writer that I have met with of his Persuasion; and who labours to reconcile *Socinus* his Doctrine with the Freeness of God's Grace, by Considerations, which, not to Injure him, I shall present you with in his own words.——*Ad retundendam verò* (says he, disputing against the Learned *Meisnerus*) *arrogantiam justificatorum, & ne dicant se meruisse Gratiam, non est necesse, servum in homine arbitrium inducere; non debet virtus tolli ut tollatur arrogantia. Sufficit,* 1. *Quod nec velle nec perficere possint, nisi Deus & voluntatem excitet & vires augeat.* 2. *Quod ea, quæ divinis adjuti viribus faciunt, nullo modo dignitati & prætio divinæ gratiæ respondent, sed infinito intervallo ab ea absint.* Nay, though the Modern and Degenerate Jews be, upon the Score of being the great Patrons of Mans's Free-will, not causlesly esteem'd the great Oppugners of God's Free grace; yet both from their Famous Rabbi, and my Learned Acquaintance, *Menasseh Ben Israel*,

Hab. 1. 16.

pag. 97.

Israel, and from divers others of their most eminent Writers, has the truth sometimes extorted Confessions, which, though made upon Erroneous grounds, were not very far short of Orthodox. To which purpose I remember, that a Jewish Professor of Hebrew, (who assisted me in my Studies of that mysterious Tongue) being, as the rest of his Nation, an eager and peremptory Champion of Free will, conceiv'd, that even that Liberty, which to us seems least to Indebt men to their Creator, did transcendently Oblige him unto God. For, one Day that we mere privately and freely discoursing together of matters of Religion, he told me, he thought Men ow'd more to Gods Goodness, than the very Angels do. For, said he, whereas God, without any good Worke of theirs, but purely out of his Goodness, conferr'd on them that blest Condition they enjoy; by giving Man a Free-will, by the good Use of which he may Glorifie his Maker; when, by Abusing it, 'tis in his power to Dishonour him, he allows Man that highest Satisfaction and Priviledge, of Co-operating to his own Felicity.

Sect. 18. And now, *Lindamor*, we are arrived at the last Property, which qualifies God, the fittest Object for our Love, which is, the

the *Advantageouſneſs* of his to us both in the preſent and the future Life. And Firſt, even in this World we owe God no leſs than all the Goods we poſſeſs. We owe him both what we have, and that we are: For we may ſay truely of God with the Pſalmiſt, *It is he that hath made us, and not we our ſelves.* And we were not only in his hands, ſo like *Clay in the Potter's*, that he might have made us any thing; but we were ſo purely that Negative, from whence we were extracted, that He (if he had pleaſed) for ever might have left us to our firſt nothing. His Love is the firſt Original and Fountain-bleſſing; all the reſt are but as Pipes (and Inſtruments) to convey, and ſerve but to hand it to us. Your Wit wins you applauſe, Your Induſtry heaps you up Treaſures; be it granted. But who gave you that Wit? and did both Give and Proſper that boaſted Induſtry? Certainly, God as much gives us all the Goods we poſſeſs, as he that gives a Beggar a thouſand pounds, gives him the Cloaths, and Meat, and all the bravery it helps him to. But beſides theſe more obvious Preſents of God's Bounty, we enjoy other effects of his Goodneſs, which, though by the Cuſtomarineſs of

Pſal. 110. verſ. 3.

Iſa. 64. 8.

their being poſſeſſed, they prove leſs Conſpicuous than the other, yet grow no leſs priz'd, when the want or loſs of them makes us ſenſible of the true value of them. Had I the leiſure, *Lindamor*, to lead your thoughts with me to the Gallies, and ſhew you there thoſe wretched Captives, that are chain'd to the Oars they tug at, and though expos'd to all the Miſeries and Hardſhips of a tempeſtuous Sea, have oftentimes cauſe given them, by their barbarous uſage aſhore, to fear the Ocean leſs than any Port, ſave Death. Could I draw from you the Curtains of ſick and dying Men, and open to you that ſad Scene, where ſome pine and languiſh away by diſtempers, that deprive them of all Joys, Advantages, and (what is more conſiderable) Uſes of Life, before they eaſe them of Life it ſelf; Others breathe rather than live, perpetually tormented either with their Diſeaſes or Phyſick to protract a wretched life, upon terms that turn it into a trouble: And others ſtrugling with the rude pangs of death, are yet perchance leſs tormented by them, than by the ſad proſpect of their former life, and the remembrance of thoſe criminal pleaſures, *which yet it perhaps leſs troubles them*

them that they muſt now forgo, than that they once enjoy'd them. Should I, *Lindamor*, bring you into Hoſpitals, and ſhew you there the various ſhapes of Humane Miſery, and how many Souls, narrowly lodg'd, (if I may ſo ſpeak) in Synecdochical Bodies, ſee their earthen Cottages moulder away to Duſt; thoſe miſerable perſons by the loſs of one Limb after another, ſurviving but part of themſelves, and living to ſee themſelves dead and buried by peace-meal. Should I, to diſpatch, *Lindamor*, ſhew you all the ſeveral Companies of Mourners, that almoſt make up Mankind, and diſcloſe to you how copious ſhowrs of Tears do almoſt everywhere water (not to ſay overflow) this vale of Miſeries; you would perchance ſee cauſe to think, that Gods privative (if I may ſo ſpeak) may contend with his poſitive Favours; and that you owe little leſs for what you are not, than for what you are, to that diſcriminating Mercy of his, to which alone you owe your exemption from Miſeries, as great as the Bleſſing it confers on you: For, *Who maketh thee to differ?* is a queſtion that may be as well askt in reference to our External, as to our Spiritual condition. Which in- 2 Cor. 4. 7.

vites me to mind you, *Lindamor*, that you are yet more engag'd to God's love for protecting you from those gross Vices that disfigure most mens minds, than from those less dangerous, though more resented diseases that distemper their bodies.

For, *Ambition*, *Lust*, *Avarice*, *Revenge*, and even that *vain Conversation* which young Gentlemen are generally pleas'd to think so innocent, a really more formidable and pernicious Diseases and Calamities, than those that reduce men to take Physick, or thrust them into Hospitals. To evince the truth of which Paradox, I hope I shall not need to mind you of judging of the dangerousness of Diseases by the Nobleness of that part affected, since I can tell you, that he that cannot erre, seems daily to justifie our Assertion, by inflicting sickness and the sharpest outward Calamities on his own dearest Children, to preserve them from the contagion of Sin, or cure them of the unfilial Habitudes of it. And therefore, since, when we see a tender Mother apply a painful Caustick to the neck of her Favorite-Infant, threatned by the Appoplexy, we scruple not to conclude, that she thinks the trouble of an Issue, an Evil inferior to the Convulsion

1 Pet. 1. 18.

ſion Fit: So when we ſee our Heavenly Father ſend Infirmities and Croſſes to reſcue thoſe he loves, from the contagion or dominion of ſin; we may ſafely conclude, he thinks affection a leſs evil than guilt, ſince he is too Wiſe and Indulgent a Phyſitian to Cure with a Remedy worſe than the Diſeaſe. In the eighth of *Deuteronomy*, there is a caution given the *Iſraelites*, leſt Proſperity (which is wont to be a kind of *Lethe* that makes men forget all but their Enjoyments) ſhould make any of them ſay in his heart, *My power, and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth. But* (ſaith my Text) *they ſhall remember the Lord their God: for he it is that giveth them power to get wealth.* It is not the revolting *Iſraelites* only, of whoſe ignorance of his Bounty God may complain, as he did by the Prophet, by whom he ſaid, *I taught Ephraim to go, taking them by their Arms, but they knew not that I healed them:* And there are but too many of whom he might ſay, as he did by the ſame Prophet; *For ſhe did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oyl, and multiply'd her Silver and her Gold, which they prepar'd for Baal: Therefore will I return and take away my Corn*

Deut. 8. 17, 18.

Hoſ. 11. 3.

Hoſ. 1, 8, 9.

in the time thereof, and my Wine in the ſeaſon thereof, and will recover my Wooll and my Flax, given to cover her nakedenſs. And this will make way for the deſign I had to recommend the advantageouſneſs of God's love by ſaying, That as for Spiritual Goods, he gives us in this Life ſo rich an earneſt of expected Joys, that even the earneſt is a ſtock large enough to ſubſiſt with Comfort on, and really out-values and tranſcends all thoſe momentary pleaſures, it requires us to forſake, to keep up a Title to eternal Ones. But to particularize God's mercies to us in this very life, would certainly take up a conſiderable part of it. And yet the love God bears us dies not with us, nor doth (as Mens affections) either endure a Funeral in our Tombs, or ſurvive only in a uſeleſs grief, (or an eſteem as bootleſs.) No, God's love is ſo far from reſembling the uſual ſort of Friends, who, when they have accompanied us to the Grave, do there leave us; that, like the Angels, that *carried Lazarus's Soul to Abraham's boſom*, its Officiouſneſs begins then moſt to appear, when our dark eyes are clos'd, and is then trueſt to the beloved Soul, when ſhe forſakes the body; giving each bleſſed

Luk. 16. 22.

ſed Saint cauſe to ſay of God, what *Naomi* did of *Boaz*, that *He hath not left off his kindneſs to the living, and to the dead.* Now, indeed (ſays our Saviours Favorite) *are we the Sons of God and it doth not yet appear what we ſhall be: But we know, when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him.* This bleſt expectance muſt be now my Theme, becauſe the narrow Limits, which my Deſign hath plac'd to this Diſcourſe (of the Advantages accruing from God's Love) will leave no more room untaken up by Heaven. Ruth. 2. 20 1 Joh 3. 1.

But, *Lindamor*, before I proceed to ſet forth to you the Greatneſs of the Felicity reſerv'd for us in Heaven, it will, I fear, be requiſite to mind you of the Lawfulneſs of having an eye to it. For many not undeſervedly applauded Preachers, have of late been pleas'd to teach the people, that to hope for Heaven is a Mercenary, Legal, and therefore Unfilial Affection. Indeed, to Hope for Heaven as Wages for Work perform'd, or by way of Merit, in the proper and ſtrict Acception of that term, were a Preſumption, to which none of the Divines, we diſſent from, can be too much an Enemy, nor perhaps more ſo than I am. But to take in God's Bleſſings among *Sect.* 19.

the Motives of Loving God, is, but to do as he did, who ſaid, *I love the Lord because he hath heard my voice and my ſupplications*; and to look upon the joys of Heaven, to comfort and ſupport us in the hardſhips and loſſes to be undergone in our journey thitherward is, to imitate no worſe a Man than *Moſes*, of whom it is ſaid, that *he eſteemed the reproach of Chriſt greater riches than the Treaſures in Ægypt; for he had reſpect*, or turn'd his Eye, (ἀπέβλεπεν) *unto the recompence of the reward.* It is indeed, *Lindamor*, a happy Frame of Mind, to be able to love God purely for himſelf, without any Glance at our own Advantages. But though I dare not deny, that it is poſſible to attain to ſo high and diſintereſs'd a kind of Love, yet I think that that Excellency ſuppos'd to be vouchſaf'd to ſome men, is not by the Scripture exacted as a Duty from all men. Were all the Recompence of Piety of a worldly Nature, and to be here receiv'd, the actions invited to, by the Intuition of it, might paſs for Mercenary. But when Heaven is chiefly hoped for, as it will admit us unto the fruition of God himſelf in Chriſt, and that the other joys expected there, are ſo far from being

Pſ. 116. 1.

Heb. 11. 26.

of

of a ſenſual or a worldly nature, that they are known not to be attainable, till by death, the Senſes and Bodies themſelves, and all the merely animal faculties be aboliſh'd: for a Heaven ſo conſider'd, I ſay, to forego readily all the pleaſures of the ſenſes, and undergo cheerfully all the hardſhips and dangers that are wont to attend a Holy Life, is, *Lindamor*, ſuch a kind of Mercenarineſs, as none, but a Reſigned, Noble, and Believing Soul, is likely to be guilty of. If I ſhould ſay that fear it ſelf, and even the fear of Hell, may be one juſtifiable Motive of Mens actions, though I ſhould propoſe, what thoſe I am reaſoning with would think a Paradox; yet I ſhould perhaps hold forth therein no more than the Scripture does, *Let us therefore fear*, (ſays the Writer to the Hebrews) *leſt a promiſe being left us of entring into his reſt, any of you ſhall ſeem to come ſhort of it*. And no leſs eminent an Herald of the Goſpel than St. *Paul*, who ſucceſsfully maintain'd the Evangelical againſt the Legal Spirit, thus profeſſeth of himſelf, *I keep under my body, and bring it unto ſubjection, leſt by any means, when I have preach'd to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſt-away*. And 'twas not to Slaves or Hirelings, that

Heb. 4. 1.

1 Cor. 9. 27.

that Christ directs this admonition, *I say unto you*, my Friends, *Be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do: But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear, fear him, which after he hath kill'd, hath power to cast into Hell; Yea, I say unto you,* (a gemination, which the present controversie shews not to have been causeless) *fear him.* Where the Paraphrase given of God, is not barely descriptive but ratiocinative (to borrow those terms of the Schools) in warning us not only whom we should, and should not fear, but why we should fear the one and not the other. As when St. *Paul* says, *I know whom I have trusted,* he means what manner of person, how *faithful* (as St. *Peter* elsewhere calls God) *and how omnipotent:* whence immediately he adds, *And I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* More Texts of the same Import might be added, if the Design of those already alledg'd were other, than to Facilitate the Admission of the more Plausible truth we have been making out, and which to us seems very clearly held forth in those and the like Scriptures, which are therefore cited out of the New

Luk. 12. 4, 5.

1 Pet. 4. 19.

2 Tim. 1. 12.

New Teſtament, that they might have the greater Authority with one ſort of our Antagoniſts. *I preſs toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.* Phil. 3. 14. *Bleſſed are they that do his Commandments, that they may have right to the Tree of Life, and may enter in through the Gates into the City.* Rev. 22. 14. *Laying up in ſtore for themſelves a good foundation againſt the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal Life.* 1 Tim. 6. 19. *To them, who by patient continuing in well-doing, ſeek for (ζητοῦσι) Glory, and Honour, and Immortality, Eternal life.* And of Chriſt himſelf, whoſe Love to God is queſtionleſs Filial and Unequalable, 'tis ſaid, *Looking unto Jeſus the Author and Finiſher of our Faith, who, for the Joy that was ſet before him, endured the Croſs, deſpiſed the ſhame, and is ſet down at the right hand of the Throne of God.* Rom. 2. 17. Heb. 12. 2. Nor ſee I why it ſhould be Unfilial for a Child of God to further the Raiſing of thoſe Paſſions, which his heavenly Father intends to have rais'd in him, upon the ſame Grounds and Motives that God is pleas'd to employ to excite them. And ſince the Scripture ſeems plainly to invite our hopes, by recording St. *Paul's* having ſaid, *Every Man that ſtriving for the maſtery is temperate* 1 Cor. 9. 25. *in*

in all things; now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown, but we an incorruptible: And by repreſenting our Saviour himſelf, as ſaying in one place, *Rejoyce, and*
Mat. 5. 12. *be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven:* In another, *Be thou*
Rev. 2. *faithfull unto Death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life.* And in divers others ſpeaking to the like purpoſe; Since, I ſay, the Scripture ſeems thus to allure our hopes, would it not be a kind of accuſing it of an aptneſs to delude and enſnare us, to teach, that it propoſeth to us the powerfulleſt objects to incite our paſſions, if it be ſinful to cheriſh and harbor the paſſions naturally belonging to thoſe objects? and certainly, *Lindamor*, ſince God, who, as our Creator, knows the Frame and Conſtitution of Man's Soul, incomparably better than he himſelf, is pleas'd to deal with our Hopes and our Fears, to engage us to his ſervice: It very ill becomes us, either to quarrel with his Methods of working on our Spirits, or to reject any help which he has been pleas'd to afford a Piety, which, for ought ever I could obſerve, does even in the beſt Men find reſiſtance enough to keep any help that can be employed to promote it from being ſuperſtitious.

ſtitious. And truly, the animating or diſcouraging influence, that Hope, or the want of it, is wont to have upon our endeavors, makes me very apprehenſive, that ſince the enlivening hopes of Heaven are not able to make moſt mens endeavors other than very Languid, the forbidding thoſe ſupporting hopes would ſoon weaken and decreaſe our endeavors into none at all.

But, *Lindamor*, though I may perhaps have taken ſome pains in ſtudying Controverſial Divinity, yet I take ſo little pleaſure in writing of it, that though not only a ſeaſonable Duty to truth, but a neceſſary one to the enſuing part of this Diſcourſe, have preſſed me to ſerve in this Cauſe; yet I ſhall perhaps obtain your pardon ſooner than my own, for having thus long ſuſpended the diſcourſing to you of the *Advantageouſneſs* of God's love to us, as it gives us here a Right, and will hereafter give us admiſſion, to Heaven, Heaven, the bright Seat of ſo much happineſs, that we ſhall ſcarcely count amongſt our Joys, that Heaven is the ſeat of them. There the Excellency of the poſſeſſed Goods ſhall as much diſappoint our expectations, as in other fruitions the emptineſs is wont to do. *Sect.* 20.

do. The Apoſtle tells us, that *Eye*
1 Cor. 2. 9. *hath not ſeen, nor Ear heard, neither have entred into the heart of Man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* Such pure refin'd Delights not only ſtoop not unto Senſe, but are ſublime enough even to tranſcend imagination. When Fancy hath form'd and ſhap'd the perfecteſt Ideas, that its abſtractions can make, of Bleſſedneſs; our own more happy experiences of greater muſt diſabuſe us, when we come to Heaven; which is a ſoil, whoſe fruitfulneſs is ſo confin'd to Joy, that even our diſappointments and miſtakes ſhall there contribute to our happineſs; which will ſo much partake of his immenſity, whoſe Gift it is that you ſee the Apoſtle gives it a Negative deſcription: and to create in us apprehenſions underogatory from what we ſhall poſſeſs, not only removes our thoughts from all we do enjoy, but exalts them above all that we can fancy. At which way of proceeding, that you may the leſs wonder, *Lindamor*, be pleas'd to conſider, that in Heaven our Faculties ſhall not only be gratifi'd with ſuitable and acceptable objects, and conſequently our Capacities of Happineſs, as well encreas'd as fill'd

fill'd. A Child not yet releas'd out of the homely priſon of the Womb, cannot there poſſibly frame Ideas of thoſe delights, which will be afforded him by the pleaſing noiſes, and the glittering objects that will preſent themſelves to him after his Birth. And the ſame Child whilſt he continues in his Nonage, though he may with Delights look upon Emblems finely drawn and painted, and may make ſome pleaſure in beholding the neat and ſurprizing Characters and Flouriſhes of a Greek and Hebrew Bible curiouſly Printed; yet he cannot then imagine the pleaſure the ſame objects will afford him, when Age and Study ſhall have ripened and inſtructed his Intellectuals, and made him capable both of underſtanding and reliſhing the excellent Moralities, couch'd in thoſe ingenuous Emblems, and the profound and ſaving Myſteries, wherewith that Divine Book, the Scripture, (eſpecially in its original Tongues) does to an Intelligent and Religious Peruſer, appear repleniſh'd. Such a double advantage, *Lindamor*, among others, the admiſſion into Heaven brings thoſe, to whom that Bleſſing is vouchſaf'd: For, beſides that ſet of Objects, (if I may ſo ſpeak) ſo new

new and ſo peculiar to Heaven, that their Ideas could never enter into men's thoughts before their admiſſion there; beſides this, I ſay, our then enlarg'd capacities will enable us, even in objects which were not altogether unknown to us before, to perceive things formerly undiſcern'd, and derive thence both new and greater ſatisfactions and delights. Wonder not, *Lindamor*, that in mentioning the joys of Heaven, I ſue the expreſſions I find leſs detractory from a Theme, as much above our Praiſes, as the Heaven they are enjoy'd in is above our Heads. For, though ſuch expreſſions may ſeem ſomewhat Tumid and Aſpiring, and fitter much for one that celebrates, than for one that but aſſerts: Yet cannot I ſcruple to uſe ſeeming Hyperboles in the mention of Felicities. which make the higheſt Hyperboles but ſeeming ones. For thoſe Joys, *Lindamor*, of Heaven, are like its Stars, which by reaſon of our remoteneſs from them, appear extremely little, though really in themſelves they are ſo vaſt, that a leſs than the largeſt is by odds greater than the biggeſt object upon Earth, nay, than the whole Earth it ſelf. And therefore as if I were to take you with me to contemplate

template the Planets, I would ſhew you them through ſuch a Teleſcope, as by a greatning thoſe bright Objects in compariſon of what to the unaſſiſted Eye they appear, doth ſomewhat leſſen the diſadvantage of Remoteneſs, and ſhews them with leſs detraction from their true Magnitude; ſo mentioning to you the Felicities of Heaven, I think it not unlawful or Improper to endeavor, by repreſentations, tranſcending what they appear, to give you Notions leſs inferior to what they are.

In Heaven, then, we ſhall taſte happineſs enough, to enable us to rectifie *Sect.* 21. the definition of it. We may there be inſtructed how to Name and Rate all Goods by thoſe that will Concentre into the Felicity we ſhall poſſeſs, which ſhall be there made up of the Confluence, Perfection, and Perpetuity of all true Joys. For, Heaven will make us hapyy, not (as Philoſophy pretends to do) by the Confinement, but by the Fruition of our Deſires: which ſhall neither fail in the choice of their Objects, nor miſs of the enjoyment of them; but be, both unerringly Juſt, aud infallibly Accompliſh'd: In the former of which Properties, (as our then Rectifi'd Reaſon will conſider things)

we shal think our selves happier (yet) tha
in the latter. We shall there Resembl
the Saints we here Admire, and shall no
only See, and be like those Pious Wor
thies, whose virtues Eclipse theirs, whic
among the Heathen Deifi'd less deservin
Heroes; those excellent Persons that did a
well Ennoble as instruct Mankind, givin
us cause to Glory, and to Blush that w
are Men, and whose Stories have the un
paralell'd Honour of being recorded b
Inspir'd Pens; Those *spirits*, I say, *of ju*
Heb. 12. 23. *Men made perfect*, as the Scripture term
them, shall be our constant and fami
liar Company, into whose blessed Societ
we shall not only be Welcome, but En
crease it. In Heaven, we shall have a bless'
and familiar Conversation with thos
same glorious Spirits, whose Nature dot
invest them with such a Lustre, that al
the Disadvantage of their Disguises, whe
they Appear to us, doth scarce suffice t
confine our Raptures to Respects belo
Idolatry, and darken them into Object
for our Wonder, not Adoration. There
we shall see (a Sight worthy dying for) tha
Blessed Saviour, of whom the Scripture
does so much, and so excellently entertai
us, and who having done and suffer'd so
much for us, does so highly deserve of us

both

both upon the score of his infinite perfections, and upon the account of his inestimable Benefits. Yes, there shall we see that Holy and Divine Person, who, when he vouchsaf'd (as his Favourite-Disciple speaks) *to pitch his Tent among us*, and dwell with Men on Earth, to fit them by his Merits and Example to dwell with him in Heaven, did so admirably mix an awful Majesty with an humble meekness, and the assum'd Infirmities of his human Nature, with the seasonable Coruscations of his Divine; and express'd in his whole life, so perfect and exemplary a Virtue, and yet so much Sweetness and Gentleness towards those Aspirers to it, that that were the most short of it; that the Jews themselves could say of him, That, *He had done all things well*; and his very Enemies, that were employed to apprehend him as a Malefactor, confess'd even to those that sent them to do so, That *never man spake like him.* And his Apostles, who had most opportunity to pry narrowly into his Actions, and were of a condition and breeding very unlike to infuse into them Heroick Resolutions, did, in spight of the frequent reproofs their failings extorted from him, and of the hardships that attended his service, think even death it self in his Company,

'Εσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν. Joh. 1. 11.

Mat. 7. 37.

Joh. 7. 46.

more Eligible, than life led out of it:
Joh.11.16 *Let us also go that we may die with him* (says even the distrustful *Thomas* to his fellow Disciples.) But, *Lindamor*, we shall there see the Son of God, not in that *Form of a*
Phil.2.7. *Servant*, which he put on, that he might suffer for us, and exercise his Priestly and Prophetick Function here below; but in that Regal State and Condition, which belongs to him by Virtue of his Kingly Office; on whose score he is stiled in the Scripture, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, all Power or Authority being
Rev.19.16 Mat.28.18 (as himself speaks) given him both in Heaven & in Earth. And now Nobly attended may we suppose this Divine Monarch to be in his Exalted Condition in Heaven,
Mat.1.13. when in his state of Humiliation on Earth, whil'st he was in the *Wilderness among the Wild Beasts*, *the Angels* are recorded to have *ministred unto him*; and whil'st he
Luk.1. lay swayth'd in a homely Manger, the multitude of the Cælestial Host were heard to solemnize his miraculous Birth, according to that passage of the Writer to the
Heb.1.6. *Hebrews*, *When he bringeth the first begotten into the World*, (he saith) *And let all the Angels of God worship him!* And yet such considerable and noble Creatures, those immaterial Intelligencers, called Angels,

are,

are, that One of them in One night was able to destroy above a hundred and fourscore thousand Men, in the blasphemous *Senacherib's* impious Camp. And so much Majesty and Superiority, does their Nature give them, in reference even to the eminentest of Mortals, That, when the undaunted *Joshua* had boldly challeng'd one of them, that appear'd to him in the likeness of a Man, and demanded whom he was for; when he knew him to be an Angel, (unless he suppos'd him to be that promis'd Messiah, who is elsewhere call'd *the Angel of the Covenant*, as it is in the Original, and in the same Text *the Lord*) he alters his address unto him into this submissive one, *What saith my Lord unto his Servant?* And even wise and holy *Daniel* himself, who was the second Person of the World for Power, and the first for much nobler Attributes, Wisdom, and Understanding, who saw so many Governors of vast Provinces, and Professors of admired Magick, inferior to himself; yet confesses to the Angel, that appear'd to him, that he was confounded and disanimated at his Presence, and adds, *How can the Servant of this my Lord talk with this my Lord?* We may safely therefore expect, that we shall then behold our

1 Kings 19. 35.

Mal. 3. 1.

Josh. 5. 13 14.

Dan. 10. 17.

Saviour, not in those disguises which disfigur'd him in their Eyes, that only consider'd his sufferings, but in that triumphant Condition, wherewith they are now rewarded. The Thorns of his now no more Gaulling, but Adorning Crown will appear upon that Radiant Head of his, more glorious, than those of the flaming Bush, wherein God appear'd to *Moses*. And we shall not see that despicable Form, which made the Prophet say, (personating the generality of the Jewish Nation contemporary with the Messias) ——— *He hath no form, nor Comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no Beauty that we should desire.* But we shall see him encompass'd with so much Majesty, and shining with so much of his Genuine splendor and Beauty, that we shall deservedly esteem him *Nephle, the Admirable.* And our ravish'd Souls shall by the more attentive contemplation of him, but find more cause to imitate the Spouse in *Solomon's* mystick *Epithalaminm*; who having dwelt upon the Beauty of the several parts that concurr'd to the accomplishing of the Divine Bridegroom, exclaims in an *Epiphonema*, very contrary to the expression lately mentioned in the Prophet, *He is altogether desires*, or by an Hebraism,

Exod. 3. 2.

Isa. 53. 2.

Isa. 9. 6.

Cant. 5. 10.

Hebraism, *Most desirable*, which our English renders, *He is altogether lovely*. His Eyes will there appear as St. *John* represents them, of active Fire, and will into the willing Breasts of the ravish'd Beholders, shoot Flames as Pure, as Holy, and as deathless as those Fathers of the Church, who beliv'd not the Angels altogether Incorporeal, may be suppos'd to have conceived the Seraphims to consist of. Certainly, since (as the Scripture informs us) *It never entred into the heart of man, what God has reserv'd in Heaven for those that love him*; That Glory can be but imperfectly expres'd by the bare Epithet of Inconceivable, with which God rewards the meritorious Sufferings and Obedience of that only begotten Son of his Love, for whose sake he is pleas'd to confer on so many thousands of Men, unimaginable Glories. He that vouchsafes ev'n to many of his servants a brightness like that of the Stars, will sure communicate a more radiant Lustre to the *Son of Righteousness*, that onely Son of His, *whom* (to borrow inspir'd expressions) *he hath made Heir of all things, by whom also he made the Worlds: who being the brightness of his Glory, and the express Image of his Person, and upholding all things by the word of his*

Rev. 1. 14.

Dan. 12. 3.

Mal. 4. 2.

Heb. 1. 2, 3

power, when he had by himself purg'd our
Eph. 1. 21. *sins, sate down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, far above all Principality and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come.* Thereby exalting him not onely above all Earthly Princes and Potentates, but even above the highest Orders of the Spirits of the Cœlestial Hierarchy.

Sect. 19. But apprehend not, *Lindamor*, that this sublime Exaltation of Christ will make him despise the meanest of his Saints, or disdain Communion with him. For,
Phil. 2. 7. St. *Paul*, assures us, That he was in the *form of God*, when he vouchsaf'd to take upon him the form of a Servant, to make us free; and sure, he that condescended so Far, and stoop'd so Low, to invite and bring us to Heaven, will not refuse us a gracious Reception there. In the days of his Flesh he was pleas'd to own *Lazarus*, even in the dishonors of the Grave, and vouchsaf'd him in that despicable condition the glorious title of his Friend. And when he descended the Mount of Olives, all the loud Acclamations of the glad Multitude, that sang *Hosanna's* to
Luk. 19. 37 38. 41. him, and strew'd his way with their Palms, their Vestments and their Praises, could

not

not divert him from Deploring, even with Tears *Jerusalem*'s approaching Fate; and expressing in the midst of his Triumps a Concern, for the very worst and stubbornest of his Enemies. And, lest it should be thought, that he was thus concern'd for worthless Mortals, onely whil'st he Shar'd and Felt the Miseries of their Condition; give me leave to observe to you, *Lindamor*, that immediately after his Resurrection, whil'st the Sense of the sudden and unexampled change of his Condition was fresh upon him, and the Remembrance of the Apostle's Ingratitude in deserting him, almost as Recent; he sticks not to give those very Disciples that forsook him, the glorious Title, (and that a more familiar one than we find him to have allow'd them on Earth) of *his Brethren*; Mar. 28. 10 and particularly shews himself Sollicitous Mat. 16. 7. for that *Peter*, who, in spight of all those empty boasts, wherewith he not only seem'd to defie Death, but Christs Prediction too, did not only forsake his Master, but deny'd him. He can in Heaven be so concern'd for his distressed Members here on Earth, that not only he can take notice of expiring *Stephen*, thorow that Acts 7. Cloud of fatal Stones that batter'd down his Prison; and can, when *Saul* was persecuting

cuting the vulgar Christian, cry out unto
Act 9. 4. him, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* as if He, and those that Love him, were
In the second and third Chapters of the *Apocalyps.* but One: But in the Messages he sends to the Angels or Governors of the seven Churches, he sufficiently manifests, That single Christians may be as particularly in his Thoughts, as if they had no other Object: His Greatness will not make his Kindness less familiar, but only more Obliging; He disdains not, even after his As-
Rev. 3. 20. censions, to say, *Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.* That King, in the Parable, by whom himself is represented, is pleased himself to welcome each Individual trusty Servant with a peculiar,
Mat. 25. *Euge bone Serve*; And in another Parable he scruples not to represent the great condescensions and familiarity, wherewith the Lord shall renumerate the faithful and watchful Servants, by telling his Disci-
Luk. 12. 37. ples, *Blessed are those Servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find so watching. Verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and will make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth to serve them.* At which expression, you will the less admire, if you consider, that besides that it is

parabo-

parabolical, and probably hyperbolical, and therefore not to be taken (as the French ſpeak, *au pied de la lettre*) in a ſtrict ſence: We find in the Evangelical Story, that our Saviour diſdain'd not to converſe familiarly with Publicans and Sinners, nor even to waſh the Feet of his Diſciples: And ſince he condeſcended to ſuch Familiarity to thoſe frail Mortals, ſo many of whom were apt to turn the favours of God into Wantonneſs, we may the leſs admire his gracious condeſcenſions to thoſe, the Sinleſsneſs of whoſe condition will keep them from turning his vouchſafements into any thing, but occaſions of Joy and Gratitude. Marvel not, *Lindamor*, as at an impertinency, that I appear ſo ſollicitous to poſſeſs you with high apprehenſions of the ſuper-eminent Dignity and Felicity of our exalted Saviour; and, that in the loftieſt and moſt magnificent expreſſions, the Scripture affords me, I have endeavour'd to make out to you, that the bright Son of Righteouſneſs is now grown uncapable of ſuffering Eclipſes, but ſhines with unclouded and unequal'd Splendor; and that we ſhall in Heaven (as the Writer to the *Hebrews* ſpeaks) *ſee Jeſus, who was made a little* (or for a ſhort while, βραχύ τι) *lower than the Angels*, Heb. 2. 9.

Heb. 2. 9. *gels, for the ſuffering of Death, crown'd with Glory, and Honour.* For it will make Heaven more Heaven to us, to find him reigning there, who hath ſuffer'd ſo much for us; and for whom, if we e'er come thither, we ſhall have ſo much ſuffer'd. For, ſince our Love will, as the reſt of our ſurviving Graces, be perfected and grow compleat in Heaven; the ineffable Happineſs of our dear Redeemer muſt needs bring an encreaſe to ours, commenſurate to the Ardency of our Love for him, and we ſhall reliſh no Happineſs more than that; which is therefore ours, becauſe he is happy, and ſuppoſes in him, what it confers on us. Beſides that, ſince the Regal Dignity, wherein (as Mediator) he is Inſtated, may make us owe our Salvation to his Sentence, as well as to his Merits; Heaven it ſelf will be ineſtmably endear'd to us, by our enjoying it upon his account. I need not tell you, what a value Lovers are wont to ſet upon the leaſt Favours that can be beſtowed on them by their Miſtreſſes, and that oftentimes a worthleſs Ribband, a Bracelet of Hair, or ſome ſuch Trifle, that nothing can make precious but her preſenting it, is highlier valued by the tranſported Lover, than the richeſt Preſents of Nature, or of Fortune. How great a Bleſſing

Bleſſing muſt it then be, *Lindamor*, to owe Joys that need not endearing circumſtances to merit the name of happineſs, to a perſon ſo belov'd, that even Heaven it ſelf will bring more fecilicity to the amorous Soul, as it is a proof of his Love, than that it is a Donative of his Bounty. As paſſionate Brides do incomparably more value the Wedding-Rings which their glad Lovers give them, as Pledges than as Gold. 'Tis ſaid of the perſecuted and diſgrac'd Apoſtles, that *they rejoyced to have been counted worthy to ſuffer ſhame for his Name.* Act. 5. 41. But if they deſervedly rejoyc'd to be allow'd to ſuffer for him; of how much Joy ſhall they have juſt cauſe, that are admitted to Reign with him? his having ſupported the Hardſhips and the Toyls (for I muſt not now call them Evils) to which our afflicted Condition of Mortality is expos'd does ſo much Alleviate them, and refreſh us under them, that in this ſence alſo it may be truly ſaid, that *the chaſtiſement of our peace was upon him, and by his hurts we are healed.* Iſa. 53. 5. But he that reliev'd us even by his Croſs, will ſure do more for us by his Crown; when he ſhall admit, and even invite, each faithful ſervant to no leſs a Bleſſing, than *to enter into his Maſters Joy.* Mat. 25. 21

So

So rich a Source of Happineſs did Chriſt deſign to make himſelf to us in all his capacities and conditions, that in Heaven and in Earth, it was, and will be, his gracious and conſtant imployment, to ſhare our Griefs, or impart to us his Joys; and either leſſen our Miſeries by his Sufferings, or encreaſe our Happineſs by his Felicity.

Sect. 23. Expect not, *Lindamor*, that I ſhould Solemnly beg your pardon for this ſeeming Excurſion, till I come to think it a digreſſion, to inſiſt on the Bleſſedneſs of Chriſt in Heaven, treating of the Happineſs which thoſe that Love him will enjoy there. Wherefore, not to ſpend time in imploring a needleſs forgiveneſs, I ſhall proceed to tell you, *Lindamor*, that in Heaven we ſhall not only ſee our elder Brother Chriſt, but probably alſo our Kindred, Friends, and Relations, that living here in his Fear, died in his Favour. For ſince, our Saviour tells us, that the *Children of the Reſurrection ſhall be* ἰσάγγελοι *equal to*, or like *the Angels*, who yet in the Viſions of *Daniel* and St. *John*, appear to be acquainted with each other: ſince, in the Parable of the miſerable Epicure, & the happy Beggar, the father of the faithful is repreſented, as knowing, not only the Perſon,

Luk. 20. 36.

Luk. 16.

ſon, and preſent condition, but the paſt Story of *Lazarus*: Since the Inſtructer of the Gentiles, confidently expects his Converted and Pious *Theſſalonians*, to be *his Crown at that great day*; When the *having turned many to righteouſneſs*, ſhall, as the Scripture foretels, confer, a Star-like and immortal brightneſs. Since (which is chiefly conſiderable) the knowledge of particular actions, and, conſequently, perſons, ſeems requiſite to the attainment of that great end of God, in the Day of Judgement, the manifeſtation of his Punitive and Remunerative Juſtice: ſince, I ſay, theſe Arguments, beſides divers others, are afforded us by the Scripture; we may ſafely conclude it probable, that we ſhall know each other in a place, where, ſince nothing requiſite to happineſs can be wanting, we may well ſuppoſe (at leaſt, if we can imagine here, what we ſhall think there) that we ſhall not want ſo great a ſatisfaction, as that of being knowingly happy, in our Otherſelves, our Friends. Nor is this only probable, *Lindamor*, but 'tis not improbable, that thoſe friends that know us in Heaven, ſhall welcome us thither. For, ſince Chriſt aſſures us, that the very Angels (though they be ſo far from being related

1 Theſſ. 2. 19,20. Dan. 2.

to

to our persons, that they are foreigners to our very Nature) receive accession of Joy for a relenting Sinner, that by repentance begins to turn towards God; you will not think it absurd, that in a place where Charity shall not only continue (as St. *Paul* speaks) but grow perfect, our dear friends should rejoyce to see us, not only begin to turn towards God, but come home to him. Nor is it unlikely, that our transported Souls shall mutually congratulate each other, their having now fully escaped the numerous Rocks, and Shelves, and Quick-sands, and threatning Storms, and no less dangerous Calms, through which they are at length arrived at that peaceful Haven, where innocence and delight (which are here so seldom match't) are inseparable Companions, both of each other, and each blessed Resident. With those friends we here lamented, we shall there rejoyce. And 'twill be but need, that the discovery of each others Virtues should bring us to a mutual knowledge of our persons; for otherwise, we shall be so chang'd, that we should never know our friends; and should scarce know our selves, were not an eminent encrease of knowledge a part of that happy change.

Luk. 15. 7

1 Cor. 13. 8.

For

change.) For those departed Friends, whom at our last Separation, we saw disfigured by all the ghastly horrors of Death, we shall then see assisting about the Majestick Throne of Christ, with their once *vile Bodies transfigured into the likeness of his glorious Body*, mingled their glad Acclamations with the Hallelujahs of Thrones, Principalities, and Powers, and the most dignifi'd Favourites of the Gælestial Court. I need not tell you, *Lindamor*, that we shall be more justly transported at this Meeting, than was good old *Jacob* at that of his Son *Joseph*, whom having long morn'd for dead and lost, he found not only Alive, but a great Favourite, ready to welcome him to an unknown Court For, whereas the Patriarch said to his Son, *Now let me die, since I have seen thy face*; the seeing of our Friends in Heaven will assure us, that we shall for ever Live with them there. The Re-union of Friends being there as priviledg'd from Divorce, as that of Soul and Body, (which scarce will be more strict and satisfactory.) For, here indeed, if our Friends do not allay our Love or Affection by unwelcome Actions, or their contagious Sufferings, we commonly dote on them to a Degree, that, as it were, Re-

Phil. 3. 21.

Gen. 46. 30.

duces God to deprive us early of them, and ſnatch our Idols, and his Rivals, from us. But there, our, on both ſides, compleated Graces, will not only Deſerve, but Allow a higher Strain of Friendſhip. The near Contemplation and Fruition of the infinitely tranſcendent Perfections of the Creator, keeping all our Kindneſs to the Creatures, not only Subordinate to the Love we owe to God, but grounded On it; as Excited Needles, when they ſtick faſteſt to each other, owe their Union to their having both been touched by the Load-ſtone; to which, they have therefore Both of them ſtronger Inclinations, than Either to the Other.

Sect. 24. There, probably, we ſhall ſatisfactorily underſtand thoſe deep and obſcure Miſteries of Religion, which, the profoundeſt Clerks that love not to flatter themſelves, acknowledge, they are unable fully to Comprehend; being after all the Toyl and Induſtry of their anxious Enquiries, reduc'd to fit down with the Apoſtle's ὁ Βάθος in Admiration of that Depth, whoſe Bottom they cannot Fathom. There we ſhall underſtand thoſe obſcure paſſages of (That Divine Book, and uncapable of Flattery) the Scripture, which, notwithſtanding all that Bold Criticks,

Rom. 11. 33.

and

and Learn'd Expositers have attempted to illustrate it, does still continue, in many Places, Obscure. There, discerning how exquisitely the several Parts of Scripture are fitted to the several Times, Persons, and Occurences, wherein their All-foreseeing Author intended most to use them; we shall discern not only a Reconcileableness, but a Friendship, and perfect Harmony, betwixt those Texts, that here seem most at Variance, and shall discover not only the Sense of the obscurer Passages, but the Requisiteness of their having been written so obscurely: That strange and peculiar, as well as otherwise criptical Method and Stile of Scripture, which often costs us so much study to find it Rational, we shall there discover to be admirable & worthy of its Omniscient Author. There, I hope, we shall have clearly Expounded to us those Ridles of Providence, which have, but too often, tempted even good Men, to question Gods conduct in the Government of the World; whil'st the Calamities and Persecutions of Virtue, and Innocence, seem approv'd by him, who accumulates Prosperities on their criminal Opposers. There, we shall be convinc'd, that all these seeming irregula-

rities, which the Heathen thought fit to impute to the giddy Whimsies of a blind female Deity, are not only consistent with God's Justice and Goodness, but are Productions of it. And though such a Belief do here, to intelligent persons, seem perhaps a greater piece of Self-denial, than to refrain from, Wine, or Gold, or Mistresses; yet in Heaven it will appear as reasonable as here we find it difficult. For, as *Bildad* speaks in *Job*, *We are but of yesterday, and know nothing, because our days upon Earth, are but a shadow.* And the shortness of our Transitory lives, not permitting us to continue long enough Spectators here, to see above a Scene or Two at most of that great Play, Acted by Mankind upon the Stage of the World; 'tis no wonder we are apt to harbor sinister thouhts of the Contriver of a Plot, whose neither Beginning nor End we are acquainted with. Which yet is little less injurious, than 'twere to censure the lofty Tragœdian *Seneca*, or some other matchless Artist, having perused but a piece of some Tragedy, whereof the latter part never arrived at our view. But when once God's whole Plot (If I may so speak) and Conduct in the Administration of the World, shall come to be disclos'd; all those Revolu-

Job. 8. 9.

lutions, and Occurrences of Empires, States, Families, and particular Persons, which Men are here so prone to quarrel with, will there appear so just, so requisite, and so seasonable, that those very things which here tempted us to deny God, shall there engage us to praise him; and we shall not so properly be satisfi'd with his Providence, as ravish'd. But especially, we shall be transported with Wonder and Gratitude, when God shall vouchsafe to discover to his particular Servants, the Reasons of his Dispensations towards them, and make out to them, not only the necessity and Justice, but ev'n Mercifulness of those very Afflictions, that were most imputed to his Severity, (no Stroke from God's Paternal Hand, either lightning Sooner, or falling Heavier, or staying Longer, than the Occasion, that Extorted it, exacted) and convince them, that their Hopes were never Disappointed, but to secure their Title to better things than those they hoped for; nor their inferior Interests prejudic'd, but for the Advantage of the Supreme Ones. Yes, all that unwelcome Darkness, that here surrounded our purblind Understandings, will vanish at the dawning of that bright, and as St. *Peter's* 2 Pet. 3. 18.

* ἡμέρα αἰῶνος. * Expreſſion may be interpreted) Eternal Day; wherein, the Reſolution of all thoſe Difficulties, which here Exercis'd (and perhaps Diſtreſs'd) our Faith, ſhall be granted us to Reward it. And I muſt profeſs to you, *Lindamor*, (as Unfaſhionable as ſuch a Profeſſion may ſeem in a Gentleman not yet Two and twenty) that I find the Study of thoſe excellent Themes, God's Word, and his Providence, ſo Difficult, and yet ſo Pleaſing and Inviting, that could Heaven afford me no greater Bleſſing than a clear Account of the abſtruſe Myſteries of Divinity and Providence, I ſhould value the having my Underſtanding Gratifi'd and Enrich'd with Truths of ſo noble and precious a Nature, enough to Court Heaven at the rate of renouncing for it all thoſe unmanly Senſualities and trifling Vanities, for which inconſiderate Mortals are wont to forfeit the intereſt of their Saviour ſo dearly bought them in it.

Sect. 25. Nor ſhall we only converſe with Saints and Angels, but with that infinitely more glorious Deity, that made them, what they are, without at all impoveriſhing himſelf. In Heaven, we ſhall enjoy (its Maker) 1 Joh. 3. 2. God, and *ſee him as he is*, who, (as the 1 Cor. 15. 28. Scripture telleth us) ſhall then be *all in all*;

all: Comprising all the Goods, we value in the Creatures, as Eminently and Fully, as the Sun doth the Light that Twinkleth in the Stars.

If one that was none of the least of the Philosophers, scrupl'd not to tell the Man that as'kd him, What he was born for, that It was to contemplate the Sun; If our best Naturalists themselves, though the darkness that is here cast upon things, and the dimness of our Intellectual Eyes, (which I remember *Aristotle* fitly compares to those of an Owl at Noon-day) permit us to discern but very little of that Wisdom, Power, and Goodness, which he has express'd in the Creation; are yet often transported and ravish'd with a just Admiration of the Perfections he has display'd in his Workmanship. If the wise Queen that came so far to visit *Solomon*, was put almost into an Extasie, by the sight of his (though Wise, yet Humane) ordering of things; And if *Angels themselves* (as St. *Peter* informs us) *desire to look into the mysterious contrivances of God*, in order to Man's Redemption: How great a satisfaction, *Lindamor*, may we justly conceive it must needs be, to be admitted to see so much of God, as Heaven will discover to us? especially

Anaxagoras.

1 Pet. 1. 12.

since so much of our future happiness will consist in that Beatifick Vision, as the Schoolmen justly call it) that St. *John* 1 Joh. 3. 2. concluded, that *we shall be like God*, because *we shall see him as he is.* And our Saviour himself paraphrases our Cælestial Felicity by this blessed Vision, where he Mat. 5. 8. says, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God:* as on the other side, the Writer to the Hebrews employs the being deny'd the sight of the Divine Object, as a description of extreme wretchedness, in that Text where, having exhorted Heb. 12. 14. those to whom he writes, to *follow peace and holiness*; he adds, as the formidablest Menace which he could make use of, to deterr them from slighting his exhortation, *without which, no man shall see the Lord.* And by this Vision our Saviour seems to describe the happiness even of Angels; where, forbidding the scandalizing of any those little Ones that believe in him, he adds, to enforce what he had said, that *their* Mat. 18. 10. *Angels do always see the face of his Father in Heaven.* We shall be so taken up with the Contemplation and Fruition of that Glorious Object, (in whose Infinity all Goods are included and dilated) that Ages, numberless as the Joys that Beatific Vision abounds with, will scarce afford us

leisure

leiſure for a diverſion to any other pleaſures, than thoſe it ſelf creates. Which are ſo Numerous and ſo Entire, that we ſhall there deſire nothing that we have not, except more Tongues to ſing more Praiſes to him, or at leaſt a capacity to pay him greater thanks for what we have. And even thoſe deſires, God's gracious acceptation will make, in being conceiv'd Accompliſh'd: for, otherwiſe Heavens Reſidents ſcarce know any other want, than that of need to wiſh: The Compleat Bleſſedneſs of their Condition, reducing them to a happy uſeleſneſs of Wiſhes, by affording them a full Præ-poſſeſſion of all the Objects of Deſire. There Time, like Fire, having deſtroy'd whatever it could prey on, ſhall at laſt die it ſelf, and ſhall go out into Eternity. Whoſe Nature is ſuch, that though our Joys, after ſome Centuries of Years, may ſeem to have grown Elder, by having been Enjoyed ſo many Ages, yet will they really ſtill continue New, not only upon the ſcores of their Welcomneſs and Freſhneſs, but by their perpetually Equal (becauſe Infinite) Diſtance from a Period. There, our Felicity ſhall always be the ſame, yet ever New. Wearineſs arguing imperfection, either in the Object, or the Appetite;

tite; the former of which is Impoſſible in God, and the Latter ſhall ceaſe in Heaven. Where our Felicity ſhall be ſo great, that Variety (it ſelf) ſhall not be needed as a Part of it. And, if Heaven do admit Variety, it may be ſuppos'd ſuch an one, as ſhall conſiſt in a further Knowledge of the Firſt Object (God,) not a Forſaking of it; and ſuch as ariſes from the fixt Beholding of the changing-necks of Doves, or ſuch as we may ſee in the diverſifi'd Refractions of the ſame ſparkling Diamond. In God, there is (if I may ſo ſpeak) ſuch a various Identity, that the Fruition of him both Satisfies and Creates Deſires: though That, without Satiety; and This, without Diſquiet. Other Delights, like the uſual Cloaths we wear, quickly grow Stale; and are ſoon worn out; whereas Cœleſtial Pleaſures participate of the Prerogative of the Jews Garments in the Wilderneſs, of not Impairing by being uſed Long. But as the amorous Needle, once join'd unto the Load-ſtone, would never, uncompell'd, forſake the inchanting Mineral; but, after Ages cling no leſs cloſely to it than at the firſt moment of their Union: So do the Saints in Heaven, with the ſame Undiminiſh'd freſhneſs ever poſſeſs their

Deut. 29. 5.

Joys,

Joys, as if each moment were the first that they poſſeſs'd them in. And, if their Happineſs do not improve by laſtinger Enjoyment, 'tis perhaps, but becauſe it was at firſt uncapable of Increaſe. Or, if our Pleaſures do admit acceſſion, they ſhall receive it from our Aſſurance, that we ſhall taſte them for ever, and perpetually repeat (or rather continue) the ſame renew'd Fruitions to an Eternity, endear'd by nothing more, than by the quiet Leiſure it will afford us, undiſtractedly to Employ it in Celebrating of the Authors Praiſes; and in a Condition, happier in that by it we grow paſt Doing, than paſt Suffering Ill. In Heaven (in a word) our inexhauſted Joys will be ſo Numberleſs, and ſo Immenſe, that we ſhall Need (as well as Have) Eternity it ſelf to taſte them fully.

But, *Lindamor*, it was not my Deſign to give you a particular Topography of this Cœleſtial *Canaan*; but only in a few words to let you ſee, that *'tis a Land flowing with Milk and Honey*. And though I acknowledge, I have given you but dark Deſcriptions (and ſometimes rather Poetical than Corographical) of what the Apoſtle ſtiles, *The Inheritance of the Saints in Light*. Yet ſince, to whet our Long- *Sect.* 26. Col. 1. 12.

Longings, for Fruitive (or experimental) knowledge, it is reserv'd among the Prerogatives of being in Heaven, to know how happy we shall be, when There: and since, what the Scripture hath reveal'd of Paradise, seems meant rather to quicken our Obedience, than satisfie our Curiosity; I may for those purposes, have perhaps tolerably perform'd that Task (of Heavenly Topography) by the acknowledgements of my disability to do it worthily. I shall now only add this property of our expected Bliss, that the vast multitude of Partners does detract nothing from each private share, nor does the Publickness of it lessen Propriety in it. This Ocean of Felicity being so shoarless, and so bottomless, that all the Saints and Angels cannot exhaust it: it being as impossible for an Aggregate of Finites, to comprehend or exhaust one Infinite, as 'tis for the greatest number of Mathemamatick Points to amount to, or constitute a Body. Our Neighbor-Regions do all enjoy the benefit of Light as well as We; yet we enjoy not less, than if they enjoy'd none. Indeed there is this difference between the Son of Righteousness and that of Heaven; that, whereas the latter, by his Presence, Eclipses all

the

the Planets, (his Attendents;) the former though radiant with a much mightier ſplendor, will, by his Preſence, impart to his Saints; according to that of the Apoſtle, *When Chriſt, who is our life, ſhall appear, then ſhall we alſo appear with him in Glory.* Col. 3. 4. So that the Elect in relation to this Sun, ſhall not be like Stars, which his ſhining obſcures and makes to diſappear; but like poliſh'd Silver, or well glaz'd Arms, or thoſe vaſter Balls of burniſh'd Braſs, the tops of Churches are ſometimes adorn'd with, which ſhine not till they be ſhin'd upon, and derive their glittering Brightneſs, and all the dazling Fire that environs and illuſtrates them, from their being expos'd (unskreen'd) to the Suns refulgent Beams. *I am my Beloved's, and my Beloved is mine,* ſays every Saint (with the Spouſe in the *Canticles*) to his Redeemer. Cant. 6. 3. *David* ſays of them that put their truſt in God, *That he ſhall abundantly ſatisfie them with the fatneſs of his Houſe, and make them drink of the River of his Pleaſures:* Pſal. 36. 6. As if he meant to inſinuate, that, As when a Multitude of Perſons drink of the ſame River, none of them is able to exhauſt it, and yet each of them may have the full liberty of Drinking as much as he Can, or as much as he could, though none but Him-

Himself should be Allow'd to Drink of it: So, whosoever enjoys God, enjoys him Wholly, or at least doth enjoy him so Entirely, in Relation to that Man's Capacity, that the Fruition of whatsoever rests unenjoy'd of God, is forbidden by the Immensity of the Object, and not the Præ-possession of his Rivals. The Angels, though of a Nature Differing from ours, and thereby plac'd above the personal Experience of our sufferings and infirmities, do yet so sympathize with us, that (as our Saviour informs us) they rejoyce at the repentance of a sinner. And though the Members of the Church-Militant, and those of the Triumphant, live as far asunder, as Heaven is from Earth, and are not more Distant as to Place, than Differing as to Condition; yet St. *Paul* reckons all the Saints to be but *one Family in Heaven and in Earth.* If then the desparity of Residences, of Qualities, and of Conditions, cannot now hinder the Lovers of God from being so concern'd in one another; how much of endearing Kindness may we suppose, that they will Enterchange, when both their Love shall be Perfected, and all those other Graces too that are proper to Cherish and Encrease it. For, the same Apostle, who,

Luk. 15. 7.

Eph. 3. 15.

to

to assist us, to conceive the strictness of the Union both betwixt Christ and his Saints, and the Saints among themselves, tell us, that *He is the Head*, and *they are his Body, and Members in particular*; teaches us to make this Inference, That (to express his Doctrine in his own words) *If one Member suffer, all the Members suffer with it; and if one Member be honour'd, all the Members rejoyce with it.* Yes, *Lindamor*, in that blessed Condition, our Wills being perfectly conform'd unto our Maker's, no Saint nor Angel can enjoy his Love without possessing a proportionate Degree of Ours. And then, since perfect Friendship appropriates to each Friend the Crosses and Prosperities of the other (as good *Barzillai* could not be highlier obliged by *David*, than by the King's Kindness to his Son) each several Beatitude in Heaven shall (in some sort concern the whole Society, and) be Ours. As Astronomers teach us, that the Earth receives Addition of Light by the Sun's Beams bestow'd upon the Stars, and from the Moon reflecting upon Her. And because our Personal Capacities are too too Narrow, to contain all that joy, we are (by the strange Arithmetick of Friendship) in a manner multiply'd into as many

1 Cor. 12. v. 27, 28.

2 Sam. 19. 37.

ny happy Persons, as there are Saints and Angels blessed in Heaven. Our perfect Union to our common Head, and mutual Communion with each other, applying and bringing home every Felicity of theirs to us. This friendly and reciprocal Sympathy, teaching us each Glorifi'd Saints Blessedness, and him ours, by a blessed Circulation, which makes us encrease, by our resenting them, those joys (of others) whose encrease we resent. But my thoughts are engaged in so good a Company, *Lindamor*, that they keep me from considering how fast the hours pass, and have almost made me forget, that the time which my occasions allow'd me for scribling to you, is so far spent, that not now at last to reprieve you from the persecution of my blunt Pen, were to be almost as injurious to my own affairs, as to your Patience. Hereafter yet I may possibly make you some amends for this, with Riper Discourses of the Nature and Duties, or (if you will) the Properties and Returns of this Love, to which I have hitherto presented you some Motives. To (the last of) which I might add, That our love to the Creature is an Earnest, but to God 'tis a Title; the one makes us the Objects, but the other makes the Object ours; That,

That, ſince there is in Love ſo ſtrange a Magick, as to transform the Lover into the Object lov'd; we ought to be extremely careful of the Dedication of a Paſſion, which, as it is plac'd, muſt either dignifie our Nature, or degrade it: And not to addreſs to any lower (or, which is all one, to any other) Object, the higheſt Intenſity of a Love, which cannot but ſtoop without our Degradation. And theſe I might expatiate on, and Recruit them with many other Motives, additional to thoſe I have already inſiſted on; but that I may more properly reſerve them to the Treatiſe of the Properties of that Love, whoſe Nature ſo partakes that of its Object, that there can hardly be produc'd more powerful Motives to it, than the Conditions of it. Since then (as I freſhly intimated) I cannot but fear that your tir'd Patience, as well as my urgent Occaſions (though theſe will recal me to morrow morning to my own Weſtern Hermitage) doth at preſent ſummon me to leave you; and ſince I cannot do ſo in a happier place than Heaven, I ſhall ſuſpend my farewels, onely to beg you to believe, that ſo Noble a Motive of exalting Friendſhip, as the ambition of rendring mine a fit return for Yours, hath ſo

improv'd my Kindneſs, that my Affection, without wronging its Greatneſs, could not Expreſs it ſelf by any leſs Attempt, than this of gaining you the greateſt, and the moſt Deſirable of all Goods, by elevating (that Noble Harbinger of your Soul) your Love to Heaven: Whoſe Joys alone are not inferiour to thoſe which the being made inſtrumental to procure them you, would really Create in,

My deareſt Lindamor,

From *Leeſe* this 6th of *Aug.* 1648.

Your moſt Faithful, moſt

Affectionate, and moſt

Humble Servant,

ROBERT BOYLE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

WHilſt this fourth Edition of the fore-going Treatiſe was upon finiſhing, it hapned, that a Devout and very Ingenious Friend of the Authors, having preſs'd to have the Peruſal of ſome Occaſional Meditations that lay by him, on ſeveral Subjects, met, among others, with that which follows; And finding the Subject to be of Affinity with what is rather Touch'd than inſiſted on, in the 65th page of the paſt Treatiſe, Touching Mens Inability to Praiſe God Worthily, and having a great deal of Partiality for the Reflection, would needs have it annex'd as it was, to the newly finiſh'd Edition: Notwithſtanding the Author's having too juſt cauſe to urge, That, beſides the Imperfections

that are made neceſſary by the Sublimity of the Theme, ſuch Occaſional Papers, eſpecially His, are wont to have peculiar Unaccurateneſſes, as being deſign'd rather to entertain the Writer himſelf, than any other Reader.

An

An Occasional Reflection upon a

LETTER,

(Receiv'd in *April*, 1662.)

Containing an Account of what passed on the KING'S *Coronation-day, in a little Country Town.*

I *Need* not, *Pyrocles*, after what we have been reading, tell you, that the Writer of this Letter thinks that both in what he has said of the King, and in what he has done to Solemnize His Coronation, he has behaved himself rarely well. For I doubt not, but you easily discern by his way of Writing, that he is highly satisfi'd with his Performances, and expects that he shall, if not be Thanked by the King, at least be Mention'd in the News-book. But 'twill, I fear, be requisite to tell you,

that this honeſt Man is not alone of his mind; for being his Landlord's Bailiff, he is eſteem'd at that rate by his Neighbours, and look'd upon as a Man very conſiderable in his Pariſh; and is perhaps thought to have a right to Pity moſt of thoſe that do not Admire what he has now been doing. And yet, You and I, who pretend not to be Courtiers, can, in his Rural *Encomiums*, and in his ill-contrived way of Honouring his Prince, eaſily diſcover ſo much that might have been Mended, and ſo much that might be Laugh'd at, that, if the King, according to His wonted Graciouſneſs, vouchſafe this Action his Smiles, it muſt not be in conſideration of the ſuitableneſs of the Performances to the Occaſion, but, *partly* as they proceed from a Hearty, though ill-expreſs'd, Loyalty and Love, and *partly*, as they afford Him a Subject of Merriment. And not onely the nice Criticks, who have ſeen thoſe Magnificent Solemnities, and heard the Eloquent Panegyricks, wherewith the principal Cities and Aſſemblies in the Nation have thought they did but Part of what they ſhould; and not onely thoſe Aſſiduous Courtiers,

tiers, who, by the Honour of a nearer Acceſs have Opportunities (deny'd to others) of diſcovering thoſe Particularities that may beſt give a high Veneration for a Great Perſon and a Great Prince, to thoſe that are qualifi'd to diſcern and relliſh ſuch things; not onely theſe, I ſay, will have a quite other Opinion of the Rural Praiſes, and Antique Ceremonies that were ſo well lik'd a hundred Miles from *London*; but this Country-man himſelf, if he were admitted to the Court, and bred a while there, would in time ſee ſo great a diſtance betwix what he has done, and what a perſon better bred might have done, that he could not remember without Bluſhes, what he now looks upon with Triumph.

And now I muſt on this occaſion confeſs to You, *Pyrocles*, that I have (on other Riſes) ſeveral times been revolving in my Thoughts, what the Angels think of thoſe Praiſes and Deſcriptions of God that Men deviſe, (For I intend not here to ſpeak of thoſe the Scripture ſuggeſts) and wherein we are moſt Applauded by others, and do oftentimes perchance Applaud our ſelves. For thoſe Cœleſtial Courtiers (if I may ſo call them)

have several Advantages to assist them in the Celebration of our common Master, which we poor Mortals want. For First, They are free from those Selfish and Inordinate Affections, that too often hinder us, either from Discerning the Excellency of divers of Gods Attributes and Wayes, or from duly Acknowledging it. They have no Sins to keep them from descrying the Justness of what he does; They have no Ingratitude to oppose the fuller Resentments of His Goodness; and they are not tempted, not to discern and adore His Wisdom, for fear they should appear Culpable for repining at His Dispensations. And indeed, their Longævity allowing them the full Prospect from end to end, of those intricate transactions of Providence, of which shortliv'd Mortals do commonly see but a part; they are questionless far more satisfi'd with the incomparably better Contrivances they discern in the Management of humane Affairs, than we are with the Conduct or Plots of the most skilfully written Plays and Romances. Besides, Those happy Spirits, of whom the Scripture tells us, that *they stand before God*, and that they *continually see His face*, have by that Privilege,

Luk, 1.
Mat, 18.

the

the bleſſed Opportunities of diſcovering in the Deity they Contemplate and ſerve, many Excellencies, which even They could never but by Experience have form'd any thoughts of; and they ſee in one anothers Solemn Adorations and Praiſes, a way of Honouring the Object of them, ſo much tranſcending the utmoſt of what We here aim at, that their Homages to their Creator may well be ſuppos'd of a farr Nobler Kind than ours. And laſtly, When I conſider, how much leſs unworthy Thoughts and Expreſſions touching Things Divine the ſame Perſon may have, when come to his full Maturity of Age and Parts, and whilſt he was but a Child in both; and when I conſider, how much more Advantagious Conceptions of the Wiſdom diſplayed in the Uuiverſe, and particularly in the Contrivance of a Human Body, one that is a true Philoſopher, and a skilful Anatomiſt, may have, in compariſon of a man illiterate, and unacquainted with Diſſections: When, I ſay, I conſider theſe things, and compare the dim Twilight of Human Intellects in this Life, with that Clear and Radiant Light, which the Scripture aſcribes to Angels, I cannot but think, that, having to the Pri-

Privilege of a much Nearer Acceſs than is allow'd Us to contemplate God's Perfections, the Advantage of having incomparably more Illuminated Intellects to apprehend them with, they muſt frame otherguess Conceptions of the Divine Attributes, and glorifie the Poſſeſſor at an otherguess Rate, than is allowed to Thoſe, whoſe Underſtandings are ſo dim, and whoſe Reſidence is ſo remote from that bleſſed Place, where the Perfections they would Extol are moſt Diſplay'd.

Aſſiſted by theſe and the like Advantages, *Pyrocles*, thoſe happy Spirits may well frame Notions, and employ expreſſions in honour of their Maker, ſo farr tranſcending Ours, that, though the Angle's Goodneſs keeps them, doubtleſs, from beholding them with Contempt; yet, we may well think, they look upon them with ſuch a kind of Pity, as that, wherewith great Wits and Courtiers look upon the Miſtakes and Imperfections of what they Did and Writ, when they were but Schoolboys; and as that, wherewith, when we ſhall be admitted to the Society of the Angels, we ſhall look back upon our former ſelves. No, *Pyrocles*, to Praiſe God is a Debt, which, though

though we ſhould ever be Paying, we muſt always Owe, not only becauſe the renewed Obligations will laſt as long as we; but becauſe, though the entire Sum were *poſſible* to be paid, *we* have no Coyn of the Value that would be requiſite to make a Payment of that nature. 'Tis true indeed, that ſome men ſay much More than others upon a Subject, on which none can ſay Enough, and which, even *the Spirits of just Men made perfect* can but imperfectly Celebrate. It may be too, that the Praiſes we pay to God procure Us ſome from Men, and perhaps even from Orators and Encomiaſts; and though I hope no Man can ſo flatter himſelf, as to think he can Flatter what he can never do Right to; yet the Zealouſneſs of our Endeavors, and the Applauſe that others entertain them with, may perhaps tempt us to think, that becauſe in our Expreſſions we have ſurpaſſed our Selves, we have almoſt equalled our Theme; as if to make our Praiſes too great for any other Subject, were ſufficient to make them great enough for God. But alaſs, how widely muſt we be miſtaken! ſince our Expreſſions, if we ſpeak ſence, can at beſt but fully repreſent our Conceptions, and thoſe being but the Notions of a Finite Creature, muſt Heb. 12.

must needs fall extremely short of Perfections, which were not what they are, if they were not Infinite. No, *when* we have employ'd the loftieſt Hyperboles, and exhauſted all the celebrating Topicks and Figures of Rhetorick; *when* we have dreſſed Metaphyſical Abſtractions in Poetick Raptures; *when* we have ranſack'd whatever things are moſt Excellent among the Creatures, and having Defæcated them, and Piled them up together, have made that Heap but a Riſe to take our ſoaring flight from; *when* we have ſummed up, and left Beneath our Expreſſions, all that we are here wont to Acknowledge Above them; nay, *when* Inſtructed, as well as Inflamed, and Tranſported by that *Inacceſſible Light*, that is *Inhabited* by what we Adore, we ſeem raiſed and elevated above all that is Mortal, and above our ſelves, and ſay things, that nothing elſe could either Inſpire or Merit; even *then*, I ſay, thoſe Expreſſions, which any otherwiſe applyed, would be Hyperboles, do but expreſs our Devotion, not the Divine Object of it, and declare How much we Honour Him, rather than what He is. And indeed, none but the Poſſeſſor of an Infinite Intellect can be able to ſay, what the Poſſeſſor of other

1 Tim. 6. 16.

other Infinite Perfections deſerves to have ſaid of Him. And whatever zealous skill we Praiſe God with, we do far leſs Honour Him than Injure Him, if we think our aſpiringſt Praiſes can arrive ſo far, as I ſay not to *Reach*, but ſo much as to *Approach* their Subject.

But, let not this inevitable Impotence (*Pyrocles*) Trouble, or Diſcourage us: thoſe Bleſſed Souls that *follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes*, do (as we are taught in the Apocalypſe) make it their Buſineſs, and find it their Happineſs, to ſpend a great part of their Eternity in Extolling him, by whom they are plac'd in a Condition, where they can have no Employment but what is Holy and Noble. And even here low, the Praiſing of God is a Work, wherein we Imitate, though we do not Equal the Angels, and are buſied in the ſame Employment, though not with the ſame Skill. Nay, Heaven it ſelf exempts not its Reſidents from an Impotence which belongs to Creatures, not as they are Imperfect ones, but as they are Creatures. Even the Members of the Church Triumphant do not Triumph over this neceſſary Impotence; their Praiſes may need Pardon, even in a Place where they can Sin no more; And they can expect but from Gods Good- Rev. 14. 4.

Goodneſs, the Acceptance of thoſe Praiſes, that are Improv'd, as well as Occaſion'd, even by their being made Partakers of his Glory. Nay, even in the Prophet *Iſaiah's Exſtatick Viſion*, the Seraphims themſelves that are introduced, as anſuering one anothers glad Acclamations to God, are likewiſe repreſented, as Covering (out of reſpect) their Faces with their Wings. But, *Pirocles*, as I was ſaying, this unavoidable Diſability to ſay things Worthy of God, need not at all trouble us; *ſince* we pay our Homages to one, whoſe Goodneſs our expreſſions can as little equal, as they can his other Attributes. He that Created us, will not Impute it to us, that we act but as Creatures; And *ſince* he has declar'd, that *where there is a willing Mind, a Man is accepted according to what he has, and not according to what he has not.* The Impotence I have been ſpeaking of, ought to bring us rather Joy than Trouble, ſince the infinite Diſtance betwixt us, without leſſening his favourable Acceptance of our Praiſes, ſuppoſes the boundleſs Perfections of Him, whom thoſe Praiſes (through his Goodneſs) help to give us an intereſt in; And no Son would repine at his Royal Fathers Greatneſs, how Immenſe

Iſa. 6. 2.

2 Cor. 8. 12.

menſe ſoever, being ſure, that Greatneſs would not leſſen his Kindneſs. For 'tis leſs Deſirable to be able to deſcribe the Power and Excellencies of him we have an Intereſt in, than to have an intereſt in one, whoſe Power and Goodneſs exceeds whatever we can ſay or Fancy of them.

To conclude, *Pyrocles*, *ſince* on the one ſide God is moſt truly ſaid in the Scripture to be ſo *Glorious*, *that he is Exalted above all Bleſſing and Praiſe*, and conſequently, though *I could* (to uſe St. *Pauls* Phraſe) *ſpeak with the Tongues of Men and Angels*, yet the higheſt things I could ſay of the Divine Perfections, muſt needs be therefore far below them, becauſe a Creature were able to ſay them. And, ſince on the other ſide, it is of Us Men, that God vouchſafes to ſay, *Whoſo offereth Praiſe, glorifieth Me*; and his trarſcendent Excellency is ſo far from being inconſiſtent with reſembling Graciouſneſs, that ſuch a Benignity is one of the moſt conſpicuous Parts of it; I will not forbear to pay my Praiſes unto one, whoſe deſerving infinitely more than I can offer, keeps him not from Accepting as much leſs than he deſerves. But then I muſt not Preſume to *fill my mouth with his Praiſes*, without Senſibly

Nehem. 9. 5.

1 Cor. 13. 1.

Pſ. 50. 23.

sensibly acknowleding, that there was not any Subject, whereon my Expressions can more want Eloquence, than on this Subject; even Eloquence it self would want Expressions.

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